Issue 50 • October 21 • 1989 • 58p

1,000 COMPUTER BARGAINS INSIDE

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BRITAIN'S BIGGEST SELLING COMPUTER WEEKLY

PC

- Fastest PC on earth
- Opus Datasafe
- PC Presentation

AMIGA

- New interactive system
- Agnus details
- Pen Pal DTP/wp out

ST

- STOS add ons
- Stunt car
- ST show coming

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PLUS:

- Beginning comms
- Tech tips
- Your letters

ANTI-HACKER CRACKDOWN SLAMMED

5 YEARS FOR HACKERS

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- Top barrister speaks out

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SHOPPING EXPRESS

32 PAGES OF BARGAINS

THIS WEEK'S BUYERS' GUIDE TO THE BEST ST SOFTWARE

HACKER ATTACK BLASTED

"Innocents will be corrupted" says computer lawyer

Leading barrister and computer law expert Alistair Kelman has warned that the Law Commission's anti-hacking recommendations published last week will lead to innocent young computer users being lured into criminal activities.

He claims that the recommendations – which are almost certain to pass into law – are too heavy-handed and are effectively a "blackmail charter". Kelman, who has himself compiled a report on computer crime for the Home Office, argues that the bottom tier of the Law Commission's report is "short sighted".

It recommends that hackers who break into computer systems for fun –even if they cause no damage – face a maximum prison sentence of three months.

Kelman told *Express:* "If you're a young hacker who receives a criminal record for breaking into a computer system and saying boo-har it's going to be easier to get deeper into this whole affair. These young hackers will be open to approaches from wrongdoers ."

He added: "If a young hacker is approached by a confidence trickster he's hardly going to report it to the police. Instead of investigating it they will arrest him; that's the way they operate.

"Anyone who previously broke into computers for fun might now be tempted to wipe important data or do more damage. You might as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb."

He called bedroom hackers "the world's innocents", and said they would be susceptible to advances from criminals.

"Hacking is a solo activity and the people who do it spend a lot of time alone with their computers. They are thus impressionable young people. If this report becomes law it could do untold damage to otherwise innocent people."

The commission's chairman Lord Justice Beldam said: "Far from being a technological youthful prank, hacking creates serious difficulties for businesses which are expensive and time consuming. To declare hacking a crime should dispel the belief that it is a harmless recreational activity."

Given public opinion and this Government's declared intention to outlaw hacking (*Express* 36) the new laws should come into effect within a matter of months.

However, they may not reflect precisely the Law Commission's recommendations. Anti hacking campaigner Emma Nicholson MP has already called for a maximum ten year prison sentence on hackers (Express 25). Last week she called the proposals "a goldmine".

Kelman called the recommendations "repressive and censorious" and called for a reappraisal. He said that his points should be taken up by MPs opposed to the new law when it comes up for debate in the House of Commons. However, there are likely to be few in favour.

The Minister for Trade and Industry Nicholas Ridley called the report "excellent", commenting: "I am inclined to accept these recommendations. The Government considers that legislation should be brought forward when a suitable opportunity arises."

Meantime, Kelman insists that companies will use this legislation to hide the fact that their computer security systems are "shoddy and unsatisfactory".

"It will just be used to hide the fact that many companies have duff systems," he said, adding that the incidence of serious hacking crimes is "extremely low".

Nevertheless, it seems almost certain that hacking will be illegal and hackers will risk prison sentences by this time next year. ■

• *Headline hitting: Public opinion will mean Government acceptance of the Law Commission's proposals*

THOSE LAW COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS...

The Law Commission has been working for 12 months on hundreds of submissions from companies and individuals who claim to have suffered from hackers activities. It recommends:

- A maximum 3 year prison term for unauthorised entry into a computer system.
- Unauthorised entry into a computer system with intent to commit, or assist the committing, of a serious crime should carry up to five years' imprisonment.
- A further serious offence of intentionally and without authority altering computer data or programs should also carry up to five years in prison. This will cover the creation of computer viruses and 'logic bombs'.

SHOOT FROM THE LIP SPECIAL

"The silly game is finally over"
The Times editorial

"The most compelling arguments for the criminalisation of hacking are the losses and costs incurred by computer system users whose security has been breached."
Part of the Law Commission's report.

"Hacking can no longer be regarded as harmless and juvenile. We will be pressing the Government to introduce legislation without delay."
The Confederation of British Industry's Judith Vincent.

"It's just an extra bit of repressive legislation."
Barrister Alistair Kelman

"I believe it would be wrong to criminalise those who have no criminal intent and create no hazard."
Data Protection Registrar Eric Howe.

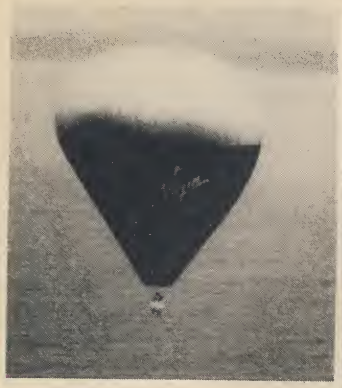
ON THE CASE

Express readers will be on the case when it comes to all the facts about hacking and the intricacies of computer crime. We've been following the emerging stories since our launch more than a year ago.

We've talked to the people who count – the MPs, the police, the victims and, of course, the hackers. And we've brought you the news first every time.

Through this detailed and authoritative coverage we've been able to predict movements in public opinion, gauge feelings in the underground hacking world and comment on official and Governmental policies.

But even that's not enough. If you know of any hacking activities or are a hacker yourself give us a call. It will be in strictest confidence. So call 0225 446034 and ask for the Express newsdesk



• Victor's PC takes to the skies with Branson

Bravo Victor

PC manufacturer Victor was last week crowing about its involvement in the ambitious cross-Pacific balloon adventure.

Victor, one of the many companies to get involved in Richard Branson's daring trip, helped out in the design of the world's largest balloon envelope. A Victor V286P portable was used to create a mathematical model of the balloon and a flight simulation was run to see how it would cope with changing atmospheric conditions.

The machine also worked out how to use the minimum amount of gas on the flight, scheduled for November 15th. Virgin boss Branson will be using the laptop during the flight from Tokyo to Los Angeles. It will be used for data-logging messages received from the flight communications crew.■

Dedication's what you need

Mirrorsoft is to invest £5 million into developing CD-ROM products. The firm says it has a line up of products ready for next year.

First out will be the CD-ROM *Guinness Disk of Records* which will cost £60. Mirrorsoft hopes to follow that up with other entertainment based disks and ultimately CD-ROM games.

Mirrorsoft chairman Jim Mackonochie told *Express*: "We decided three years ago to get involved in 16-bit and, after a quiet first year, that proved to be a great success. Now it's time to look at the developing optical disk publishing area."

The money has been invested through Kevin Maxwell, director of Mirror Group Holdings. It will also mean a linking up with Mirrorsoft's sister company Pergamon Compact Solution which has been involved in CD-ROM for some years.■

• Speed machine backs rival standard

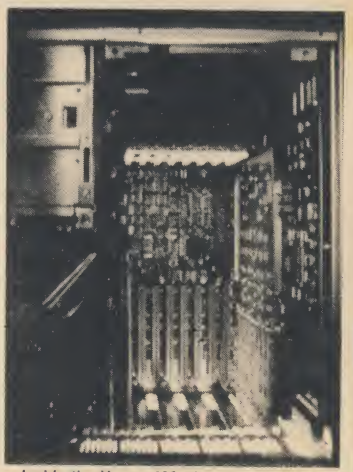
486 POWER PC BREAKS RANKS

An incredibly fast PC was last week launched by US company Hewlett-Packard which threatens to rival the performance of expensive mini and mainframe computers. But, significantly, the machine does not use IBM's new standard.

The Vectra 486 PC is one of the first to incorporate the amazing Intel i486 chip launched earlier this year (*Express* 24), with other major PC manufacturers lining up to launch their own monster PCs.

HP's Vectra incorporates the controversial EISA standard – rival to IBM's MCA. EISA is Extended Industry Standard Architecture and has been backed by the likes of Compaq and Olivetti. The supporters of EISA claim that it is logical upgrade from the standard established by IBM at the beginning of the decade. However, IBM has opted for its own upgrade called MCA (Micro Channel Architecture).

The Vectra 486 can compete with a minicomputer on speed and power and is claimed to be three times faster than any other PC. Hewlett Packard says the 32-bit machine takes full advantage of Intel's creation which boasts more than a million transistors. The cost of the Vectra starts at £10,000 which, while out of most people's reach, is not expensive for a machine of its capabilities.



• Inside the Vectra 486: the expansion slots break away from IBM's standard

It has been widely predicted that super-fast 486 machines will be well within the reach of consumers within the next three years. It is understood that Epson and Compaq will be launching similar PCs within the next few weeks.■

Top firms back EC piracy law

Seventeen leading software companies and associations have teamed up to endorse the new European Community's proposed directive on the legal protection of software.

They want to see a common law throughout all EC countries which will deal with computer piracy and copyright.

The "Common Statement" welcomes the EC's proposed directive to bring the law under one umbrella but has made some requests for minor changes.

At present each country has its own laws. Packages which qualify for legal protection in the UK might not in, say, Italy. "Software piracy has resulted in at least $1 billion in lost sales in Europe last year alone, " said Peter Davies of Ashton Tate, one of the 17. "We're spending £1 million a week on the development of software and we're entitled to expect a return on the work that went into it and the value of it to the user."

The Common Standard wants the EC to create an "originality test" that programs would need to pass in order to qualify for copyright protection. The current draft directive does not include such a recommendation.

Large companies such as Ashton-Tate have been stepping up their anti-piracy campaigns in recent months with investigations and prosecutions on the increase.■

Stacy's music on the move

Atari is considering selling its Stacy laptop with a music package in an attempt to attract buyers in the music industry.

The firm sees the £700 laptop as a portable music sequencer ideal for those on the move. The firm has already scored a success with its bundle of the Steinberg music system with the 1040ST.

An Atari insider admitted that talks were underway but said any such bundle would be some time off. Although Atari says it is too soon to talk of bundles is thought that some special deal will be put together as soon as the first orders are satisfied.■

• Stacy: Pop computer

Talking rubbish!

Computerised rubbish bins are being installed in Wrexham town centre in an effort to combat litterbugs.

The bins are limited in their computing capabilities but their main function is to talk. They can be programmed to to speak in any accent or language and say things like: "On behalf of the council and advertisers thank you for keeping the town clean."

The bins are powered by a solar batteries and cost £1,000. The inventor is offering them free to various councils and hopes to cover the cost by selling advertising.■

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Trespassers will be prosecuted?

It is difficult to know how to approach hacking. The easiest way to visualise it is probably as the electronic equivalent of trespassing; destroying or stealing data by copying could be regarded as the equivalent of destroying or stealing property, and while hacking with intent to steal would be an offence, innocent hacking – the equivalent, perhaps, of walking harmlessly across Farmer Giles's field to have a look at his piglets – would be OK. Like the innocent trespasser, the hacker would be asked to leave by the quickest practicable route, and that would be the end of it.

But it's not that simple, of course. Trespass is a civil wrong, a tort, meaning essentially the police won't be involved – it's up to Farmer Giles to take action against you himself if you've been tramping across his fields. (And you can't be prosecuted for trespassing, whatever the signs say).

Hacking, under the proposals from the Law Lords, would be a criminal offence. Even a curious peek at someone else's computer data over the phone lines, however harmless the intent, could involve the police, and hence, a criminal record. It is this fact that is worrying many commentators – those with a police record are the most likely to re-offend, and the concern is that the curious hacker, once drawn into a 'life of crime', will go on to hack with more malicious intent – and more dangerous consequences.

The laws as they are proposed are otherwise quite right. The police must have some clout, or their job of catching hackers – already made extremely difficult by the fact that hackers, like good ramblers, leave no traces and disturb nothing – will be virtually impossible, and have to rely on legal arcana such as theft of fractions of a penny of electricity.

But the proposed laws against simple, plain, innocent, harmless peeking must be used very sparingly. Ramblers found short-cutting across a field are not arrested when the vandals who broke the farm gate can't be caught. Similarly, the laws if implemented must be kept as a deterrent, and not a means to find scapegoats.

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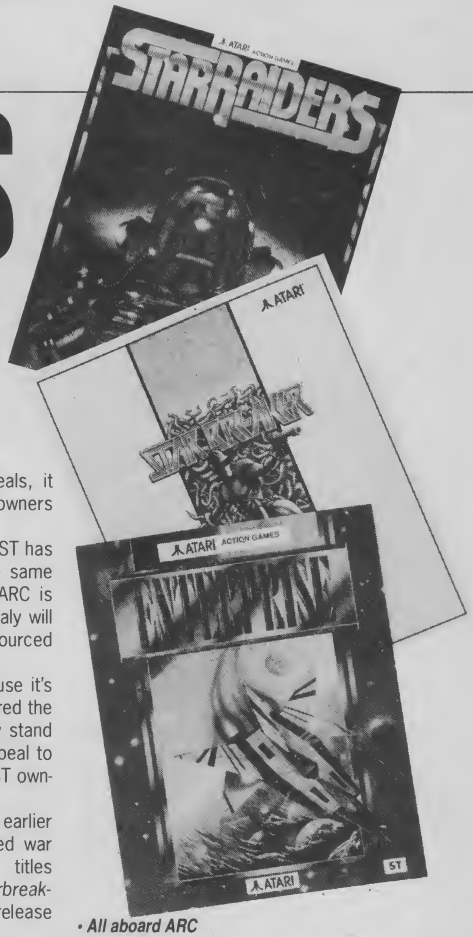
ATARI PLANS GAMES BLITZ



• All aboard ARC

Atari Software has changed its name and re-organised its internal structure for an all out attack on the 16-bit software sector.

The outfit will now be called ARC and promises a software blitz over the next year. 15 games are planned for release on ST, Amiga and PC before Christmas with "loads" planned for 1990. Atari is still nurturing hopes of toppling big boys such as Ocean, MicroProse and US Gold as the leaders in UK gaming.

Heavyweight marketing and development plans are being drawn up with former US Gold director and industry veteran Tim Chaney secretly plotting Atari's strategy.

The name change has been brought in to distance the software arm from Atari itself. Whilst ARC will enjoy the power wielded by Atari in picking up top programmers and securing trade deals, it fears PC and especially Amiga owners will be put off by the connection.

In some European countries the ST has failed to make anywhere near the same impact as Commodore's Amiga. ARC is worried gamers in Germany and Italy will pass over product obviously sourced from Atari.

"We chose the name ARC because it's short and sharp and has zip," offered the firm's Darryl Still. "It doesn't really stand for anything. We really want to appeal to Amiga and PC owners as well as ST owners."

Atari Software scored a success earlier this year with the highly acclaimed war game *Borodino*. Forthcoming titles include *Hellraider*, *Prince* and *Starbreaker*. "We've got an absolutely huge release schedule," said Still.■

Beeb boom soon

Discontented BBC game players are to be rather well catered for this Christmas thanks to Superior Software.

Superior has a number of releases planned for the next few months. The first is the latest in the *Play It Again Sam* compilation series and includes the cartoon plumbing romp *Pipeline*, the classic maze game *Monsters* and the battle hit *Barbarian* as well as a new game with a medieval flavour - *Baron*.

Another new game due for release is *Ricochet*, which according to Superior features "a bouncing ball in a space station".

Perhaps the most exciting release for Beeb owners is Superior's conversion of System 3's *Last Ninja 2*. A big hit on the other formats last summer.

Superior hopes to have two more games out in the near future.■

England will thrash Windies

Well, up to a point. Computer cricket fans are being offered the chance to field England's cricket elite against any team in the world in the new updated version of *Graham Gooch's Test Cricket*.

Included are the names of today's top players from around the world as well as a few other clever little additions to the original game. So if you're tired of seeing the mighty West Indians make fools out of "our boys" – take it out on your C64. It costs £9.95 (£12.95 disk). More on 01861 1166.■

Nintendo attacks again (again)

Serif Games, Nintendo's latest British distributor, is to attempt a feat which has been beyond all others – making the console a success in the UK.

A major TV ad campaign is planned in the run up to Christmas designed to send parents potty as their fun loving offspring plead for the games machine. The ads will show off the full range of Nintendo hardware including the robot playing partner and zapper light gun. Apart from the 'family around the telly having fun' type ad Serif is also planing a "fast paced" affair detailing some of the 50 or so games currently in the UK.

Over the past three years various companies have attempted to recreate Nintendo's extraordinary success in the US over here. They include games giant Mattel and Nintendo offshoot NESI.■

Sub £1,000 386 PC

PC manufacturer Walters has become one of the first companies to offer buyers a 386 machine for less than £1,000.

The firm has cut the price of its 80386SX from £1,020 to £930. That machine offers one megabyte of RAM with a 20Mb hard disk and VGA graphics, and features the cheaper 386SX chip. The more powerful two megabyte version has come down from £2,249 to £2,030.

Bargain hunters can expect to see all 386 and 286 continue to drop in price as the competition hots up.■

SNIPPETS...SNIPPETS...SNI

An airline accounts clerk has been remanded on bail accused of smuggling £30,000 worth of cannabis into Heathrow inside computer peripherals...

Oh dear. Strange public domain outfit Paradise Computers has announced a new offer – free condoms. Anyone who orders more than four pounds of Atari ST PD between now and the end of the year will receive their free gift through the post. One shudders to think what other "freebies" they'll dream up...

Topologika is offering its new accounts and invoicing program *Stock Pack* for £29.95 on the Beeb, Archie and PC...

New look on-line service Microlink has opened 39 extra telephone access points for "loggers". The brings the total to 228. Only a few months ago Microlink only had 63...

• PSD: Speccy arrival

Purple on the Spectrum

If you own a Speccy then you're in for a bit of a treat. *Purple Saturn Day* was a big hit on the 16-bit machines just before Christmas last year and it's just been released on 8-bit machines.

There are four competitions to the game the first being a race through the rings of saturn dodging meteors .The second is something called the brain bowler where an energy ball bounces around your brain. The third level is a time jump where a giant catapult hurls you through time. Level four puts you on a 'tronic slide' so you can hunt down energy.

Purple Saturn Day comes from Infogrames and costs £14.99.■

USSR backs Brit micros

Following a lowering of restrictions of computer exports to the Soviet Union, British PC manufacturer Opus has scored a success with its XT and 286 PC-compatible machines.

The firm has won an order worth £250,000 to a Moscow based vehicle components company. And the firm says it will follow that up with a series of contracts worthy hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Opus moved in on the huge Soviet market early by helping to set up the Moscow-based International Computer Club. It is attempting to become a household name in the USSR with an extensive ad campaign.

It claims to be the first Western company to have its logo on the side of Moscow buses.■

Tooling up

Every programmer knows that good results come from talent. But critical time can be saved using the right tools.

Software Construction's new Toolbox catalogue lists 2,200 different products all claiming to help out developers using MS/DOS, OS/2, UNIX, Macintosh and even XENIX platforms. To receive the 60 page autumn '89 copy call 0763 73455.■

FRIDAY 13th VIRUS CHAOS FLOPS

The much feared Datacrime virus failed to make an appearance on the nation's computer systems on Friday.

The only unlucky ones were hordes of journalists searching for a story. After the publicity there had to be a computer disaster. In the event they had to make do with The Royal National Institute for the Blind's computer system going wrong.

Most had to admit that the whole thing amounted a non-event and tried to forget it – until the next Friday 13th at any rate.

But even if Datacrime failed to show up there were a few viruses floating around. Jerusalem reportedly caught some people out and remnants of the 1813 which had a small effect last January are still around. Five computers at the Royal National Institute for the Blind's employment technology unit were disrupted with up to six months work being destroyed. The RNIB estimate the cost of replacing data could be as much as £25,000.

Operators of large computer networks weren't going to risk it anyway. Many simply changed the date on their computers to Saturday 14th thus tricking any lurking viruses.

It has been suggested that the intense media hype may well have the adverse effect of producing copycat virus writers. Next year we may not be so lucky.

• As we go to press, no cases of the notorious Datacrime virus have been reported in this country. However, in Switzerland, government installations were contaminated, while in Holland, one in 10 personal computers were thought to have been infected, prompting Dutch police to launch an investigation into the virus's perpetrators - Datacrime is believed to be Dutch in origin.■

Why Atari chose Julia

Pop singer Julia Fordham's UK tour begins on October 25th and Atari has underwritten the whole thing to the tune of "tens of thousands" of pounds.

Atari decided to put its name to the singer because "her audience consists of the more perceptive adult: album and CD buying, technically minded and intelligent people."

Atari had been considering sponsoring a trendier singer along the lines of Yazz (*Express* 24) but a deal with record company Big Life fell through.

When asked if he enjoyed Fordham's music an Atari spokesman wisely suggested that the sponsorship deal was right for Atari.■

Brazil lifts computer restrictions

Brazilian computer users deprived of state of the art American products are soon to get their hands on all the latest from the world leader in computer goods.

Since 1977 Brazilian governmental restrictions on technology imports have meant that large numbers of products we take for granted could not be imported into Brazil. The government had prohibited imports of high technology products if similar wares were being manufactured by Brazilian companies. The authorities had feared foreign domination of its computer market.

Now though the laws are to be loosened ending a bitter wrangle between the Americans and Brazilians. Representatives of both countries are to have regular talks aimed at lowering restrictions and clamping down on South America's appalling software piracy problem.

Some of the laws have already been scrapped.■

Monitor manufacturer Microvitec has launched a new 14 inch VGA scan display. The firm says it is the first in a new series of Scan monitors to be released over the next 12 months. Microvitec is calling this its first move into "the truly mass monitor market" which would suggest some low cost models in the near future. This weighs in at a reasonable £449.■

• Level 9 leaves ghouls & goblins behind

'WHY WE DUMPED ADVENTURE TAG'

One of Britain's most prolific team of adventure programmers Level 9 has quit the adventure scene saying it has no life left.

The Austin brothers have been churning out adventures for the past five years. But the trio have decided that there's no interest left in old style adventures.

From now on the firm will be concentrating solely on role playing games and risque multiple choice modern day affairs. The writers of games such as *Ingrid's Back, Red Moon, Snowball* and *Gnome Ranger* have decided to leave goblins behind in favour of sexy adventures.

"There hasn't really been much innovation with standard adventures over the past few years and we find new games competing with the old classics rather than with other types of games," said Level 9's Pete Austin. "There are still a lot of adventurers but they prefer the old classics. There's no money left in adventures."

• *Level 9: Quitting adventures*

Austin explained: "We're going for the *Leisure Suit Larry* type games with pull down menus , modern plots and animation. And we'll be writing movie type games which involve strategy as well as arcade elements."

He said the new line up of games would be as daring as possible but added: "We can't be too adult because of the attitude of the publishers." Level 9 plans to launch seven games next year.

"People who once went out and bought text adventures are now going for RPGs such as *Dungeon Master*," added Austin.■

Robots in the home

Robots are about to leave the factories and are soon going to be a part of everyday life, it was claimed at the recent Robot Symposium in Japan – the country with the world's largest robot population.

Joseph Engleberger, inventor of industrial robots, reckons that technology to make robots "see" has got to the stage where they are on the verge of being used in the real world instead of the more predictable factory environment. He cites farming, construction, and helping the aged and handicapped as areas in which robots are already being used effectively.

Robots' ability to see is being improved all the time. Japanese researchers with NEC have produced a robot that sees with ultrasound, but takes nearly four seconds to process an image of 128x128 pixels.

A rival team at Mitsubishi are working on laser light; a prototype robot intended to work in nuclear reactors can work out the distance and size of objects, but takes 14 seconds to do so. They are trying to get it down to four seconds.■

Write stuff

A tiny computer has been produced in the US which can recognise printed handwriting written on its screen using a stylus.

GridPad from Grid Systems is PC compatible and costs £1,900. Users can write on it in the same way as a notepad. The info can then be transmitted back to a central computer through a modem.

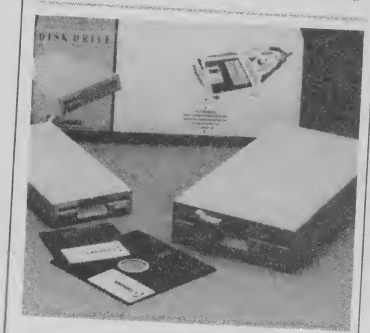
It is hoped that policemen on the beat will be able to use these instead of their little black notepads but it's also aimed at sales reps and delivery men.■

IT REALLY IS APPALLING

A nation of PCW owners are under threat from a most sinister new force. It's not a virus or any other piece of technical devilry. It's worse. It's a strip poker game.

We can reveal that the perpetrator of this appalling affront to all things decent is Artronic. That firm has attempted to slip the poker game into its new compilation PCW Challenge. The £14.95 package includes *Formula 1, ACE, Skywar* and *Strip Poker.*

PCW owners may perhaps have thought their machine beyond this. Not so. Still, *ACE* isn't a bad game. Call 0423 525325 if you dare.



• *Cumana's new range of disk drives*

Drive master's new products

Cumana, the leading name in disk technology, has announced that it will be releasing two new drive systems for the ST and Amiga.

For the Commodore user in search of an external drive, the CAX 354 is a basic 3.5-inch drive offering 80 track, double sided format, for full 880K storage capacity in a 25mm high slimline casing. Atari owners looking for a similar system can go for the CSA 354 - a 3.5 inch, 80 track, 720K capacity drive which comes complete with a built-in power supply and moulded plug.

For users at the higher end of the market wishing to use 5.25-inch disks, the CAX 1000S and CSA 1000S (for Amiga and ST respectively) offer 40/80 track switching and the ability to read MS-DOS format disks, particularly useful for Amiga A2000 users.

Anyone wishing to find out more about these drives can contact Cumana on 0483 503121.■

DTP boom gathers pace

Despite the low attendance at the recent DTP Show, a recent market survey by market researcher Romtec reveals that desktop publishing in the UK is still booming.

The Apple Macintosh dominates the field, and the number of desktop publishing systems is almost doubling every year.

Romtec found that 43% of all DTP systems have been bought in the last year, with Mac systems accounting for 59% of all users – this compares to 39% for PCs. Apple's Laserwriter comfortably dominates the rapidly burgeoning laser printer market with 31% of total sales.

DTP software sales are up too, by 57% on last year. Aldus *Pagemaker* is still the most popular. The program is available on both IBM PC and Apple Macintosh and accounts for 41% of all DTP software.

Another significant fact uncovered by the survey is that the price is not the most important factor for most buyers of DTP systems. Most buyers list efficiency and quality at the top of the list.■

Those people in the computer trade aren't necessarily the bunch of money grabbing automatons some would have you believe. Some of them are actually human.

Take the staff at Action Computer Supplies. Through a campaign of fun days, competitions and in-house raffles employees of the well known dealer raised £1,000 for the Guide Dogs For the Blind Association. That's enough to train a bright dog and keep it in good health.

"A guide dog can bring miraculous change to a blind person's life through independence and a unique companionship," said the Guide Dog Association's Anne Thair (right). She received the welcome cheque with her guide dog Yvonne.

• Lighthouse Computers in Deal, Kent, is raffling a Sega to help raise money for the families of those soldiers killed by the recent IRA bombing. Tickets are one pound. Call 0304 362049.

PRESENTING THE PC

This year's DTP Show provided a platform for a relatively new venture in publishing – Desk Top Presentation. Andy Storer takes a look at its projected future…

London's Arena exhibition hall, down in The Docklands, sits in a massive construction site that's obviously a product of computer-aided design. The architecture's all distinctly post-modernist – clear glass buildings trimmed and topped with roofs and cornices seemingly culled from classic clip art collections.

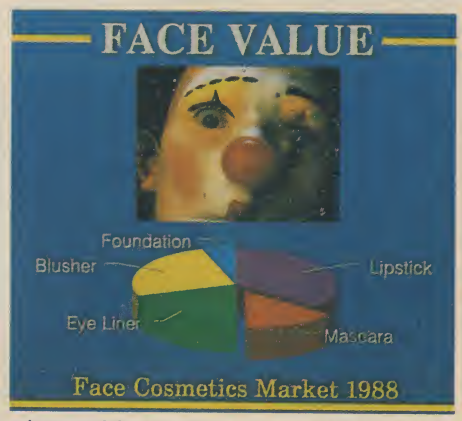
CAD software will have assisted the design of the main structures, the clip art styles copied and pasted in, the resulting forms rotated in a number of 3D elevations and exported to a DTP package. After text and bylines have been added and the proofs lasered, glossy brochures will greet prospective lease holders looking for premium office space. Interested parties will be invited to custom viewing rooms where overhead projectors will shine the designs from small screen to big screen and close the deal.

Desk top presentation makes sense. As personal computer DTP systems are beginning to make colour separation possible on screen, the hitherto separate fields of reprographics, graphic design, and DTP are converging. However, there's also the convergence of video technology. More and more cheap genlock systems are being made available - devices which allow you to synchronise computer and video images. Complete with new software advances, even the staid old PC is moving into the multi-media arena.

Why desktop presentation?

There are two main reasons why you might want to investigate presentation packages :

- To produce promotional material – generate slides or high-quality colour hardcopy from your desktop. A package like *Art Director* will satisfy all your needs.
- To exhibit materials in front of an audience using overhead projectors relayed from a monitor. You can hire complete PC presentation systems with overhead projectors for £80 per day from Samuelson on 01 208 0011.
- To produce laid out text and graphics material on videotape for viewing on a TV screen. Again Samuelson can offer you rental equipment at around £150 per day, or alternatively you can buy the PC software from Autodesk on 0753 869455 for £230.



• *Just one of the presentation styles you might generate on your PC - A pie chart with shaded background and inset photograph courtesy of Art Electric on 01 494 3167.*

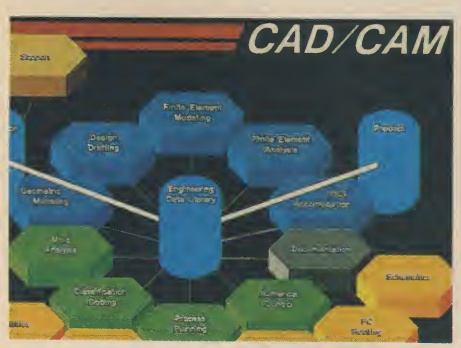
• *Art Director in action - a PC presentation graphics system that allows you to produce finished slides at up to 4000lines resolution*

What to look for

- A facility to combine charts, diagrams, text and graphics to produce professional slides, overheads and hardcopies.
- Functions to condense, expand, scale, slant, rotate, duplicate, mirror, and shadow text in a wide variety of fonts
- A slide show feature allows continuous scrolling for live promotional display
- A 'progressive reveal' function allowing you to overlay a sequence of images for subsequent flipping between screens.
- Choice of built-in chart format displays
- Multiple charts per slide
- Output of text and graphics to low-cost film recording, mono and colour hardcopy
- Output to International Service Bureau Network for high-quality imaging

- *Some integrated presentaion packages are:*

PC Presenter ● Crosfield 0442 230000 Slide makers
Prince Graphics ● 01 602 7161
Projected Image ▪ 0734 755277



• *PC Presenter - a versatile presentation package from Crosfield allows you to import data from spreadsheets, databases and word processors and combine it with digitised images. The material can then be manipulated in an art package environment and projected or hard copy results produced.*

CREATING SLIDES

One facility very useful in desktop presentation is the creation of slides from computer graphics and PostScript files.

Art Director, by Creative Graphics Systems on 01 603 3313, is an AT compatible graphics package capable of displaying 256 colours on screen from a palette of 16.7 million.

PostScript files from other systems can be converted to run under *Art Director* and may be output to 35mm slide, laser, colour hardcopy, laser image typesetters or Overhead Projector transparencies.

A long list of specifications includes zoom facilties, text manipulation, drawing and charting functions and scanner support.

Art Director is typical of the high quality presentation packages now arriving for the PC and considerable cuts the cost of sending disks to third party facilities houses for output. Best results are obtained if slides are output at 4000 line resolution or higher.

• *You can have slides done for you individually at a high street bureau - check the Yellow Pages. Expect to pay around £5 per slide.*

DTP SHOW HIGHLIGHTS

• Acorn showed off its new Desktop Publisher package for the Archimedes - an impressive £149 system featuring real-time font scaling and full colour support.

• Adobe showed up for the first time on UK soil to exhibit its *Type Manager* for the Mac - a £79 utility that allows ordinary printer drivers to produce PostScript quality output.

• Autodesk showed off its impressive VGA PC *Autodesk Animator* - a paint and animation program that can accept video images in realtime and manipulate and add to them before 'printing' back to videotape.

• Commodore took a stand to put its A2000 based DTP system through its paces - combining the excellence of colour Amiga graphics with high resolution output to laser

• Crown launched its *SpeedMaster* laser printer - a device offering output ten times faster than any other PostScript or LaserJet printer for £2,275

• Mitsubishi unveiled its MH216 handheld scanner which includes intelligent Optical Character Recognition, line-art and half tone digitising.

• Polaroid demoed its new Presentation Copier - a high-quality screen to printer colour dumper - and its PC compatible Freeze Frame video image recorder and *Palette Plus* slide generator.

OUT OF THIS

Only a thousand SIGCAT 89 CD ROMs were pressed - making this library of Voyager 2 reconnaisance photos an instant collectors' item. Andy Storer got his hands on one and took a tour of the heavens.

The SIGCAT/GRIPS 89 CD ROM disc is a 517,568k collection of state of the art digital images produced by US government agencies or organisations under contract to them, like NASA and the National Center for Supercomputing Applications.

Besides an impressive range of 40 satellite shots of various terrestrial land masses and a variety of image processing programs for the PC and MAC II, the bulk of material comprises 75 shots from the Voyager Viking spacecraft's unique photo album.

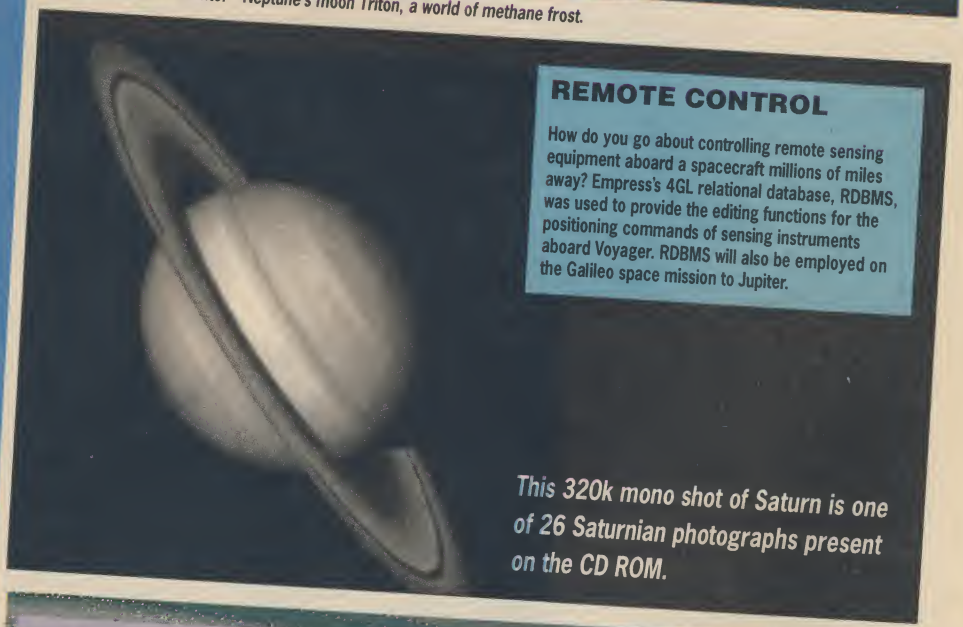
Launched twelve years ago, on a reconnaisance expedition no one currently alive is ever likely to make, Voyager is now leaving our solar system after its final extraterrestrial encounter when, on the morning of August 25th, it swept a mere 3000 miles above the blue methane clouds of Neptune to record its last images.

Once these were beamed back to Earth and processed by NASA, Meridian Data, American pioneers of CD ROM research and development, pre-mastered a write-once disc which was sent to Philips and DuPont Optical to be mastered on glass and 'replicated' a thousand times.

Meridian are well versed in CD-ROM publishing having produced titles for Microsoft, Lotus and Hewlett-Packard but GRIPS remains a first for them since it's the first CD-ROM ever to combine both PC and MAC file retrieval formats.

If you fancy your chances of getting hold of one, Meridian are on 0101 408/438 3100.

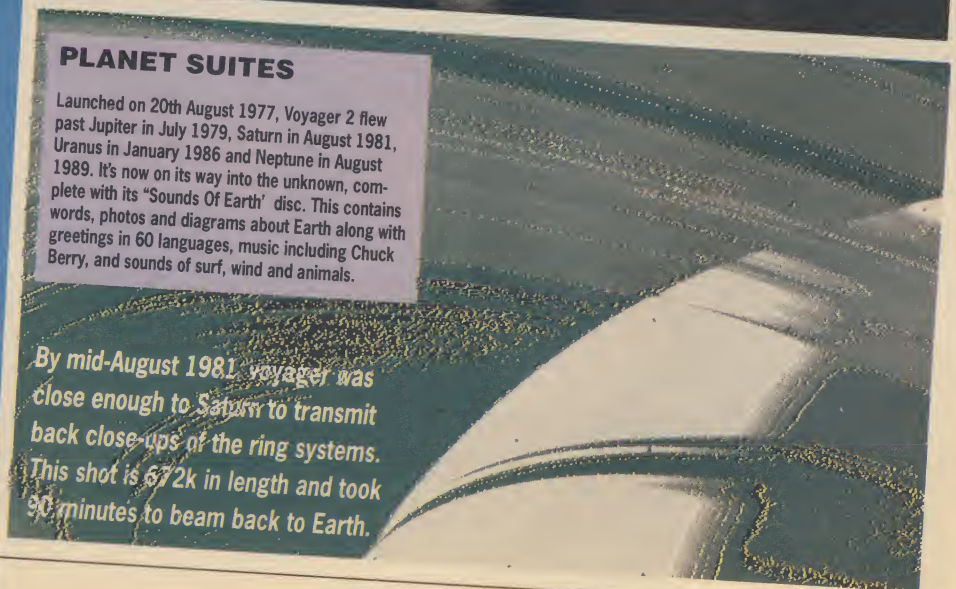
• Voyager's final encounter - Neptune's moon Triton, a world of methane frost.



REMOTE CONTROL

How do you go about controlling remote sensing equipment aboard a spacecraft millions of miles away? Empress's 4GL relational database, RDBMS, was used to provide the editing functions for the positioning commands of sensing instruments aboard Voyager. RDBMS will also be employed on the Galileo space mission to Jupiter.

This 320k mono shot of Saturn is one of 26 Saturnian photographs present on the CD ROM.



PLANET SUITES

Launched on 20th August 1977, Voyager 2 flew past Jupiter in July 1979, Saturn in August 1981, Uranus in January 1986 and Neptune in August 1989. It's now on its way into the unknown, complete with its "Sounds Of Earth' disc. This contains words, photos and diagrams about Earth along with greetings in 60 languages, music including Chuck Berry, and sounds of surf, wind and animals.

By mid-August 1981 voyager was close enough to Saturn to transmit back close-ups of the ring systems. This shot is 672k in length and took 90 minutes to beam back to Earth.

WORLD

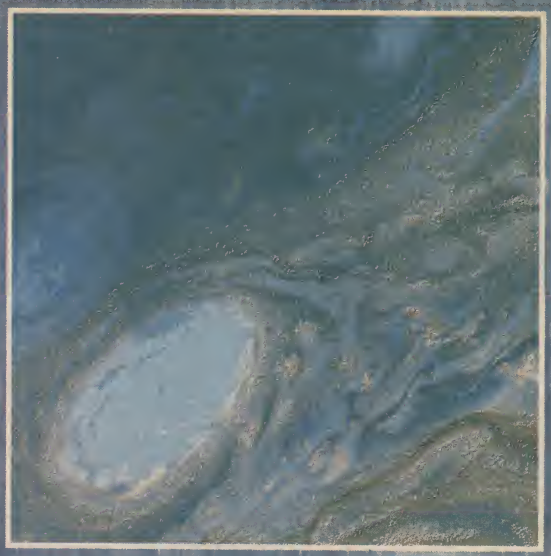
FAR-OUT FACTS

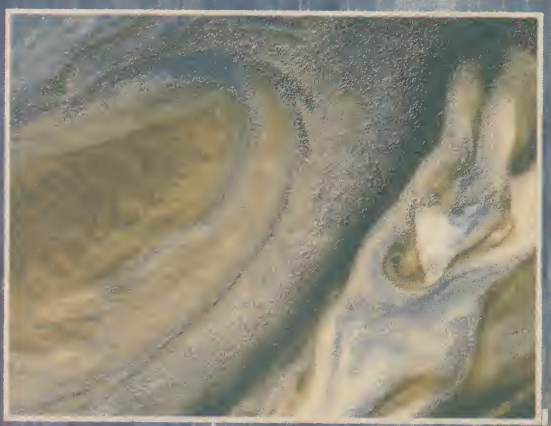
Did you know...
Mars is red because its surface is rich in oxidised iron compounds resulting in a blanket of rusty dust.
• Mars's highest mountain, Olympus Mons, is three times the height of Everest and the size of France
• One of its canyons, Valles Marineris, is as wide as the U.S.A.
Jupiter is twice as massive as all the other planets put together and is the equivalent of 1300 Earths
• Jupiter's Giant Red Spot is a cyclone that's been raging for 300 years
• Voyager discovered Jupiter has a ring system too?
Saturn has a density 2/3rds that of water - if you found an ocean big enough Saturn would float.
• 99% of Saturn's rings lie in a zone only as wide as the Statue of Liberty is high.
• Winds on its surface average out to speeds of 900 m.p.h.
Uranus has the rudest name in the Universe
• It has 16 rings and rolls rather than spins
• Voyager discovered 10 of its 15 moons
Neptune gives off more energy that it receives from the Sun.
• One of its moons, Triton, orbits so close it's going to disintegrate to form rings in 10 million years time.
• The surface temperature never rises above -363F, even in summer.

• The infinite path of Voyager 2, launched from Kennedy Space Center on 20 August 1979

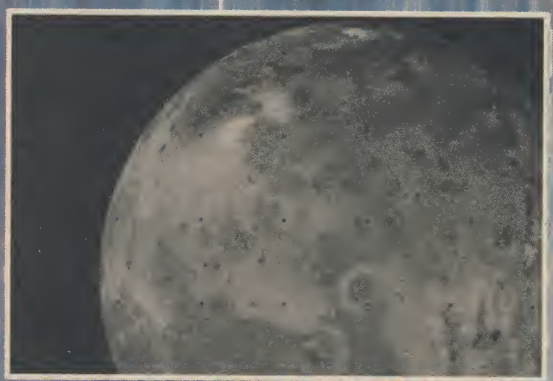
THE NEXT VOYAGE

The Galileo mission will be launched by a space shuttle, hopefully later this month and arrive at Jupiter in December 1995. but instaed of heading straight there, the Galileo craft will go via Venus to pick up gravitational energy with which to propel itself. Once in Jovian orbit, a sensing probe will be lowered for 75 minutes into Jupiter's crushing atmosphere. Meanwhile, Galileo will hang around until November 2007 beaming data back home.





• 2 close-ups of Jupiter's methane clouds - each image is a 700k image processed via Voyager's wide angle camera in July 1979.

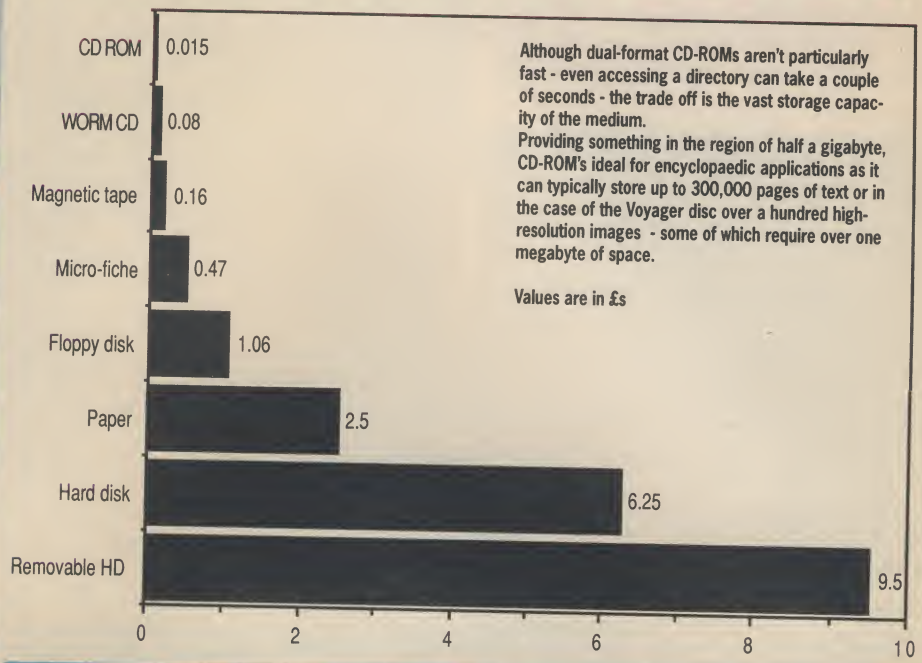


• One of Jupiter's 16 moons, Io

• An artist's impression of Voyager 2 in its fly-by Saturn on 12th Novemebr 1980.

THE CD ROM REVOLUTION

• Mars's curious moon is here transformed into a 1.3 MByte image that was captured using an exposure time of only 0.05 seconds.

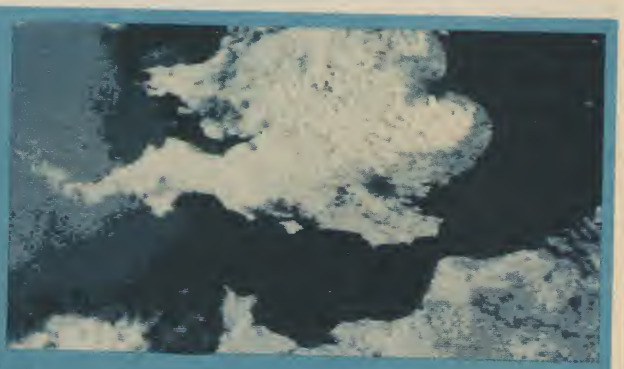


Although dual-format CD-ROMs aren't particularly fast - even accessing a directory can take a couple of seconds - the trade off is the vast storage capacity of the medium.
Providing something in the region of half a gigabyte, CD-ROM's ideal for encyclopaedic applications as it can typically store up to 300,000 pages of text or in the case of the Voyager disc over a hundred high-resolution images - some of which require over one megabyte of space.

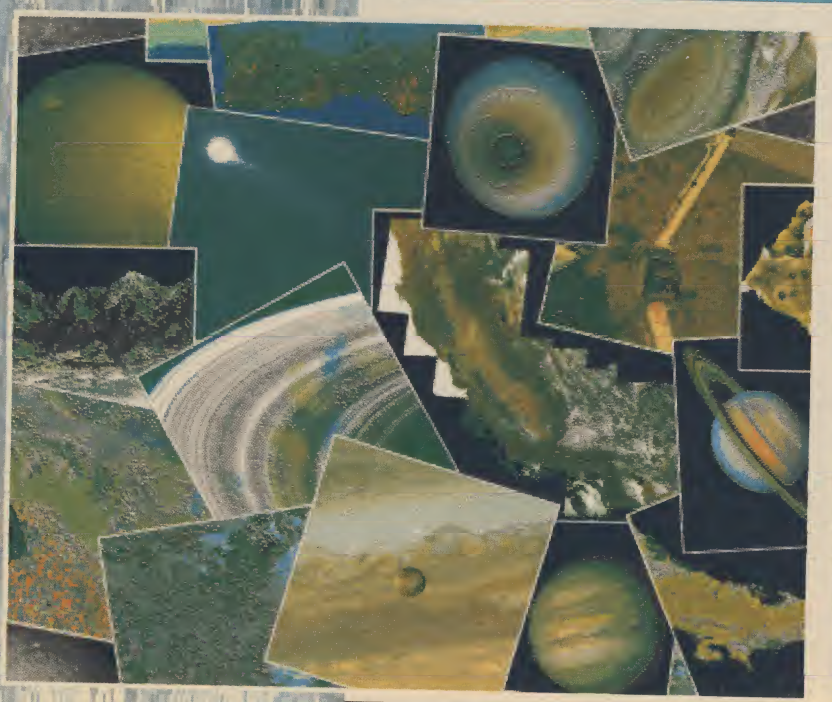
Values are in £s

DOWN TO EARTH

*Amazing CD-ROM disks and players are one thing - but they tend to be expensive - the cheapest is from Comcen (0792 796000) at £650 for the PC and Mac. As there's hundreds of PD programs available for CD-ROM it may be worth a look.
*If you're interested in delving further into this new technology then there's an exhibition on at the Novotel, Hammersmith, London between October 24th and 26th.
* Meanwhile if you're after your own shots from outer space then there's two ways you can go about getting them :
1. Buy a Maplins Parts Catalogue from your local newsagents where you'll find information on building your own satellite receiver/decoder for use with your micro. For around £160 you can receive weather photographs from various orbital and geostationary satellites.
2. Alternatively, if you have a modem, you can join Microlink (0527 64295) and download images from its Weatherlink service for £7 a month. This standard fee will also allow you access to all Microlink's other Telesoftware services at local call charge rates. All micros are catered for and images are reported to be of a very high quality.



• (Right) A 224k montage of NASA shots from Voyager and various satellites



TOP TEN US CD ROMS

1. Books in Print
Contains over 770,000 book titles accesible via 17 search criteria. A sequel will feature an additional 66,000 reviews.
2. BMUG PD ROM
500 MBytes of PD software
3. Clip Art 3D
2500 colour clip art images with Postscript format output
4. Electronic Encyclopaedia
Grolier's Academic American version containing more than ten million words representing 270,000 printed pages.
5. Electronic Map Cabinet
600 Mb of detailed city street maps of 300 US metropolitan areas
6. Timetable of Innovation
An interactive history of 6,000 important events taken from 50 different reference works.
7. Desktop Sounds
Over 400 digitally recorded music and vocal effects
8. Computer Specs
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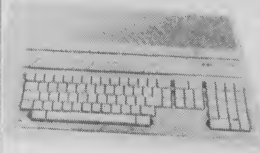

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EXPRESS MAIL

Dear Reader

Another collection of comment, controversy, compliments... and Rob Ainsley's replies. Have you got something to say? Make your voice heard in computing's liveliest letters page! Send your contributions to:
Express Mail, 4 Queen Street, Bath, Avon BA1 1EJ

PS. Sorry, but we just don't have the time to give personal replies, whether you include an sae or not. We're too busy putting Express together!

YOU'LL HAVE A JOB

I am writing some advice in response to PJ Clews (*Express* 48) and anybody else complaining about the difficulty of getting jobs in computing.

1. It's not a question of whether the computer industry is short of people – what all the fuss is about is that they are short of skilled people. There is a big difference!

2. To enter the computer field you must either have the necessary qualifications (eg HNC, HND or degree) or be exceptionally talented, like the people at *New Computer Express*.

3. You must be prepared to move if you cannot find any job opportunities in your area. Let's face it you cannot compare Crewe to the affluent South, OK ya.

So my advice to PJ Clew would be to pursue a course in Higher Education. Many such courses provide a sandwich year providing valuable work experience. But note even with the qualifications it may take up to 6 months to find employment due to the competitive nature of the industry. Best of luck to PJ Clew!

PS Don't believe everything you read in the press!

Miss S Cumming, Hull, East Yorks

• I suspect, from the letters we've had from well-qualified northerners unable to find computer jobs, that the regional factor is probably the most important of the three. I'm also from Hull, in East Yorkshire, and now in Bath through force of economics (though I'd much rather be working in the much friendlier and less pretentious North-East).

PRICE WARS

Will you shut up! You keep going on about piracy, face it, it is still going to go on while ST and Amiga game prices are high.

I know of one computer shop that swaps copies with a policeman and a postman as well as some top Amiga programmers. So when you tell us it is our fault try being realistic, if anyone has a copier they will use it, you probably do yourself, so shut up!

Claw

• No, I don't copy programs myself, and if anyone ought to shut up, it's people like you who have nothing sensible to say. Wibbling about high prices is no defence; having 16 bit games is not an inalienable right. If you can't afford the games, don't buy the machine.

THEY GET YOUNGER

I remember a kid, a few issues ago, who claimed that he was the youngest computer programmer. Well, I started when I was 7 (boast, boast). I am now 13 and can program in 6502 machine code (brag brag).

Also, why do people compare computers to consoles – ST/ Amiga versus PC Engine/ Sega Megadrive? The consoles are dedicated games machines, so of course they are better for games than computers. (Apart from the Archie, that is!)

Thanks for doing the RISC articles that I suggested in previous unpublished letters.

Your coolest ethnic minority reader

Vijay Mahrra, Wolverhampton, West Midlands

• Any ten year olds out there program in 6502 or 8086? We want to hear from you. In particular we want to know why you aren't doing your homework instead.

WHEN I WAS GREEN IN JUDGMENT

While your item on Green Computing was admirable in principle, I regret it fell down somewhat with actual advice offered regarding ribbon re-inking. I think most people would regard inching round the ribbon with a toothbrush as a somewhat drastic sacrifice of time and in any case you do not state what ink to use. Using the wrong ink could certainly cause problems with the print head, resulting in far more waste of energy then it was the original intention to save.

The obvious solution, which you did not mention, is to have ribbons re-inked by Aladdink. The cost is likely to be between 1/5 and 1/2 of buying a new ribbon, with the added assurance of a professional job and friendly, personal service. The ink used includes the lubricant necessary to protect the printer head, and no CFCs are involved.

Dedicated toothbrush users may buy the correct formulation of black ink from us for £8 per bottle (approx. 2 fl.oz).

Our address is...

Nick Godwin, Aladdink

• Oh no you don't! You'll pay for your ad space like everyone else. (Thanks for the point though, Nick).

POINT TO POINT

A brief answer to Dave Palmer's letter (*Express* 48). Of course I didn't miss the point entirely! If Mr Palmer took the trouble to read my letter properly, he would have noted that I agreed with him and only expanded the argument slightly.

The idea of an unemployed user group for the ST is an excellent idea. Such a group would not necessarily be extended only to the unemployed - other groups traditionally considered to be on a low income could also be catered for; students, OAPs etc.

I did think Mr Palmer's rhetorical question about how low income people could afford to buy a ST or original software was a little facetious. People save hard for their equipment, sacrificing a great deal along the way. When they buy their machine, they may have miscalculated the amount of money they need for software, or simply have to spend the amount they had saved up on other things (like food?).

Modern students, for example, actually have a need for a computer, in order to help them cope with the vast volume of work they have to produce each term. Perhaps they scrape by and buy a machine with a decent word processor, but then can't afford to buy other pieces of software. Even buying PD software – added to the cost of tractor paper, printer ribbons etc – can be prohibitive for such people. People who can afford to buy every piece of software they want ought to be thankful for their good luck.

Now, solely due to the fact that *Express* published my previous letter, I am pleased to say that it looks like a genuine ST club of this nature will soon be able to start up in the near future. One person who replied to me, Marcus Mansukhani, has decided to have a go at starting a ST club much in the same way that the original Spectrum group SUUG, runs.

I hope that *Express* will award Marcus the free subscription that they gave with good will to the other person, or failing that, support him in any other way they can. If Marcus succeeds in setting up his club, *Express*'s letters page may well have been responsible for relieving the boredom of hundreds of low income ST owners in a constructive way. As well as being the best letters page around, it's even a humanitarian aid!

By the way, the "Star letter" software I was given has been donated to SUUG. My thanks for your generosity.

Paul Bocij, Normanton, Derby

• If Marcus wants to get in touch with us we'll see what we can do. Thanks for making your point – I'm getting a bit lost now though in this correspondence; I can only really handle one point at a time (unless you bowl to an offside field, when you can also have a cover point).

SCAN REWARD

I am thinking of buying a Kempston Daatascan in the near future. I saw it priced in your September 30th issue, in the Shopping *Express* column at £150. I have looked everywhere for a price near this but have had no luck. Please could you tell me where you have seen this price advertised.

Ian Parker, Shepperton, Middlesex

• Sorry – it now appears that there's a new model of Daatascan which is £230. The old price presumably refers to the old version. If you can't find it mail order, Kempston is on 0234 841224.

IT BUGS ME

Well we've had spring, and the first bugged version of Mini Office Professional Plus for the PCW. We had summer, and the second bugged version; now here we are in autumn and we wait for the third version (unbugged we hope). I phoned Database today and they assure me that the next version will be ready in three weeks. Now where have I heard that before...

Another little snippet of information I acquired was the programmer works from home. Is he scared to go into the office perhaps?

Thank heavens for 3" Software! Their thesaurus may be Locofile based, but it works, and the goods were delivered the day after I ordered them.

Brian Smith, Plymouth, Devon

• Three inch software are on 01 546 2754 and their Thesaurus costs £14.95. Interestingly, if you call up 'bug' on the Mini Office Thesaurus, it is completely oblivious of the word's usage to mean 'error in computer program'. Anyway, we've given Database quite enough stick this year; perhaps it's time to quietly forget the Mini Office Professional Plus business.

EMULATING AMIGAS

I read with interest the letter from J Hanson (*Express* 45) concerning his 'Amiga Emulator' for the Atari ST. I was rather surprised by your rather sarcastic reply. What Mr Hanson describes is perfectly possible – I indeed know of such a program.

The emulator 'Amy68', runs a vast amount of Amiga software with a clock speed of around 7MHz. Whilst this is slower than the ST running its own software, it does allow the often enhanced Amiga versions to be run.

There are some features on the Amiga which the program does not emu-

late, however these are not noticeable to the normal home user. Amy68 was written by an American, Tim Mayhen, using AUD68000. The program, as far as I know, is only available via shareware sources (although I have not found any shareware/PD clubs that sell it).

Amy68 was revised in Programmers' Tech Journal ($29.00 monthly from the USA) and was rated as being "very good value ($69.99), but a little slow". I hope this information has cleared things up.
Colin Westwood, London

• Ah, but have you actually seen it? This is the point. There are a million rumours, reports and 'reviews' of emulators, but have never seen one working. Like the Russian UFOs, I'm afraid I shall remain totally unconvinced until I see one in my own back yard.

Sarcasm? Ha! You ain't seen nothing yet. Paranomasia, litotes, zeugma, asyndeton, metaplasm... this question is loaded, and I'm not afraid to use it.

CHEAP PRINTS

Wow! Mannesman Tally 9-pins at just £600 – bet there'll be a huge queue. And double life heads, too!

Wait a mo – I could buy two Epsons, Stars or Citizens for that, and still have change for a year's supply of ribbons. Or a few pints – I'm off to the pub!
Tony Bridge, Boyden

• Well, I'm sure that MT would say that you get what you pay for and that their printer is better quality/ lasts longer etc. As £600 would only buy you 540 pints in Bath, and last a mere 11 months at a sensible 21 units per week, any of the above printers would be a better long-term investment.

HONG KONG STORY

I am thinking of purchasing a console, but I am split between buying a SEGA Megadrive, a PC Engine, or a Konix multi-system (or whatever its called).

I saw an advert in one magazine (not yours, although you are the best) advertising both the Sega Megadrive, and the PC Engine for £99 pounds each (the p&p was £10). This company was based in Hong Kong. They were selling the cartridges quite cheap as well. Is it safe ordering from a company as far away as that?

About piracy, I don't agree with it, I think people should pay for the good things in life, if they don't want to pay for software. Why don't they look in the PD sector? There are some excellent games there, like the ones produced by Budgie UK for ST users – excellent software at no cost. One of the best protection systems I have seen is the novella used by companies like Magnetic Scrolls. I know it is possible to photocopy these, but most of the time the novellas are so big it is not worth their time photocopying it.
J Brome

• I wouldn't order anything from a company in Hong Kong myself. Though it is a very cheap place to buy software and hardware, buying it at this distance is very risky. What do you do if your stuff arrives and you realise it's copied, or it doesn't work? Hong Kong computer markets are probably the cheapest in the world, if you can out-bargain the very canny Cantonese traders. But I think you have to be on the spot. (Odd fact: you can get from London to Kowloon by train changing just twice, once at the Hook of Holland and once at Moscow).

And yes, I think the novella idea for copy protection is the most workable. I mentioned once before that we at Express would be happy to write novellas for any games house that's interested, but funnily enough, no-one's got in touch...

PD FILE

I've recently bought a "serious" Amstrad, having played around with a Spectrum in my misspent youth and I keep coming across this phrase "public domain" without fully understanding precisely what it means. What exactly are its origins, how does it operate etc?

As far as I can tell, it seems very much against the spirit of the times viz. this Government's obsession with market forces and profit-making in general. (Whoops, little bit of politics there...)
Phil Turner, South Normanton, Derbyshire

• Public domain' software is software that's completely free from copyright: you can make as many copies as you like, distribute them to your friends, and it won't cost you a penny. It's generally written by enthusiasts who get satisfaction from other people seeing their work, and many programs are really excellent – professional standard, written by professional programmers. You can get word processors, spreadsheets, databases, games, graphics – anything, even the Bible on floppy disk. Check the ads in Express – there are many PD outfits that will let you have the pick from their catalogue for a small copying charge, just a quid or two.

THEM AND US

Your reply to P Kwong's letter about American Amiga magazines (*Express* 48) was far too glib to be helpful. Stateside magazines might be a tad more technical than most of the British efforts, but some relief from the constant barrage of games software can only come as a good thing.

Yes, the adverts in them are sickening, but only after you convert the prices to sterling to see how much we're being hit for hardware. As very little of the emphasis is placed on software reviewing, the "ridiculous" lead times aren't of much consequence. As for the quality of the writing, the folks at Amiga World and Amazing Computing can make even the most complex system structure a breeze! Actually getting the magazines is the biggest difficulty, and is never cheap. Amiga Centre Scotland (031 557 4242) always have a good supply, but be prepared to pay up to £3 an issue, exclusive of postage.
Stewart C Russell, Glasgow

• Thanks for the info. 'Too glib to be helpful'? I was trying my best to put him off buying American mags! We have to protect our own interests, you know...

SCREEN TEST

I would to respond to the letter from Stephen Mercer (*Express* 48) about small screen games on the Amiga.

1. There are several reasons why the majority of companies adopt the screen size of 320 by 200 pixels - referred to by Mr Mercer as NTSC.

(a) Development of high quality 16 bit software for the Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC requires an approach whereby the extensive graphic design involved can be utilised across the 3 formats. The only sensible solution is to adopt a 320 by 200 screen size and I believe this to be the approach adopted by the majority of UK software houses.

(b) Sales of our software in the USA are also very important to us and it would not make economic sense to develop different versions for the UK and USA.

(c) A larger screen would consume more memory - leading to fewer features in the game and also a slower update rate. A product such as F-16 Combat Pilot uses all available memory and ideally we could have used a lot more for features that had to be chopped from the original specification.

2. Mr Mercer clearly does not appreciate the extent of piracy on the Amiga or the magnitude of investment necessary to produce titles of the quality of F-16 Combat Pilot.

Amiga piracy is bad news and the problem is getting worse, with cracked games arriving from various European countries even before the title is released in the UK. Overall sales per format are falling and there comes a point where it is no longer possible to break even on the development costs.

Protection in its various forms is our only means of combatting this and of ensuring that funds are available for the development of future products. We accept that protection is hassle for the honest consumer and we continue to search for less obtrusive ways of protecting our investment from those who put our livelihoods at risk.

For Mr Mercer's information, my company has offered customer service second to none throughout our seven years of trading and for a nominal charge for postage and disc, we will exchange corrupted media by return of post. To put Mr Mercer's mind at rest, the protection system used will have no detrimental effects on his drive - it is regrettable that the Amiga hardware is unusually noisy as this makes discs accesses far more noticeable.

Sorry this has got so long but I'm sure I speak for many software houses on this subject. We do care about our customers and value their feedback enormously. If only you could see some of the letters from our customers and the reams that we write in reply.
Dave Marshall, Digital Integration, Camberley, Surrey

• Thanks for detailing the reasons behind the small screen games, Dave. Let's hope it persuades some people that software houses are not just out to fleece the punters, but have to walk an economic tightrope with every game they produce, and do the impossible by making money despite piracy.

GROUP THERAPY

My aim is to supply demos, graphics etc to any ST user who requires them. All I ask is that they supply the disc and keep to a limit of two discs each time they order. I will supply the discs at 80p per disc if it is required. There are no hidden charges.

If there are any ST users who would be willing to put a lot of time, and are interested in starting a free ST PD group, I would urge you to get in contact with me or Mike O'Donnell at the following addresses: Awesome Demos, 3 Mason Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 3EE. Or Mike at 5 Worthington Close, Palace Fields, Runcorn, WA7 2QG.
Graham Smith, Seaford, East Sussex

• Good luck.

YOU DOESN'T PAY YER MONEY

I am fed up with all these blockheads complaining about the price of software. I myself have owned an Amiga 500 since Christmas, and in the space between Christmas and now I have never bought a game from a software shop. If these people had any sense they would buy the games cheaply from mail order. I do it all the time and I never get any problems. The one I recommend is Holmesafe. If you order by Visa, the game is on your doorstep the very next day. Only one last thing, your mag is great!
Mark Belly, Warwickshire

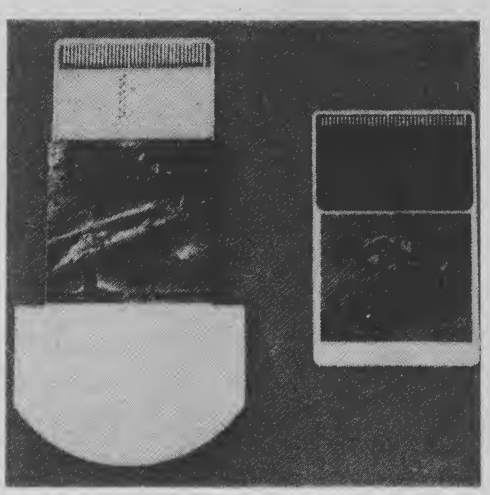
• Buy this man a drink, someone!

PIRATE SCUPPERED

In *Express* 45 there was a piece about console pirates in Britain. You never gave the full address of where pirate cartridges can be bought. Can I have the full address please.
Thomas Day, Matson, Gloucester

• Sure. It's Ronald Biggs, Back of a Lorry Software, Third Washroom Along, Sao Paulo New Street Station, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

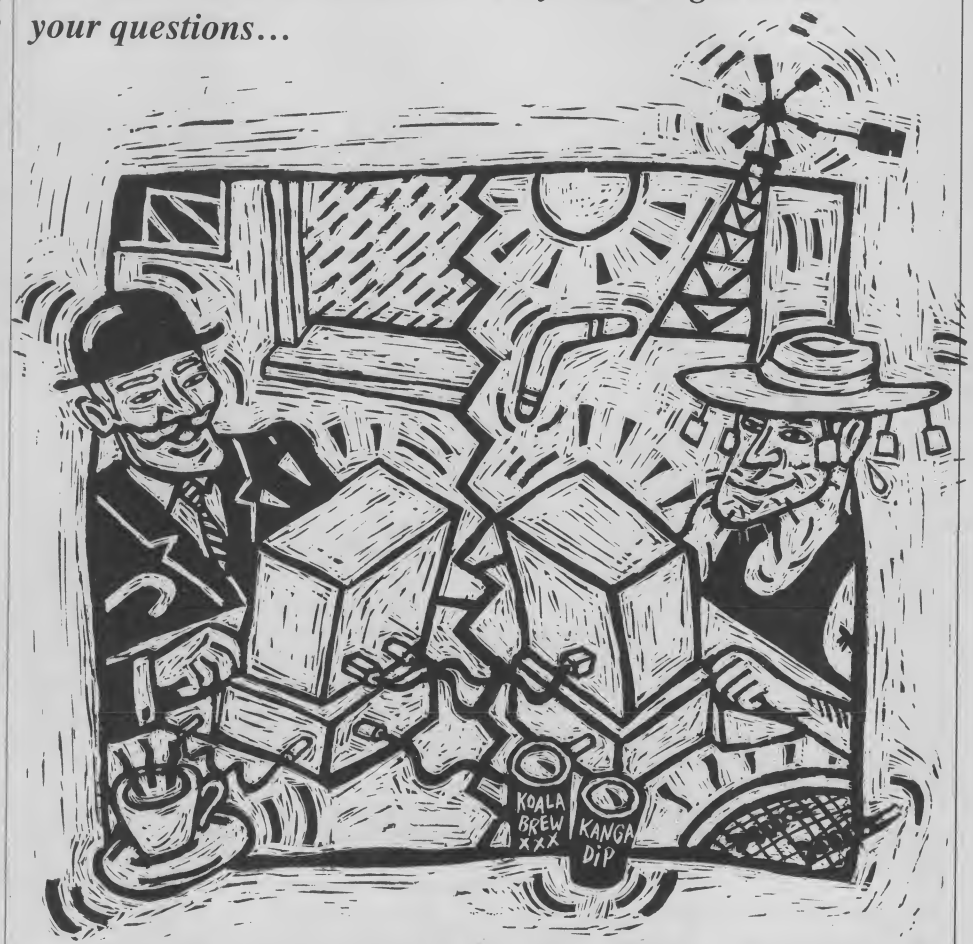
What do you mean, don't be silly? You started it.



A cartridge – and a cheap, illegal pirate copy. You want one? We tell you where to go.

HERE COMMS EVERYBODY

Comms. What's it all about? Jerry Glenwright answers your questions...



Q. What is comms?

A. Comms is the colloquial term used to describe communication between two or more computers via the public telephone network. To effect this communication modems are used. That's the dictionary definition, but there's a lot more to it than that. For most users, comms is the computer equivalent of citizen's band radio.

All evening and usually late into the night when telephone charges are at their cheapest, the comms enthusiast is poring over a hot keyboard and glowing monitor using the telephone lines to make contact with remote computers, copying programs and data, talking via the keyboard with other computers users and generally exploring.

Comms allows otherwise hermit-like computer people to make friends with others having similar interests, or to try out strange new operating systems running on expensive mainframe and mini computers all through the keyboard and serial port of their own little home micro.

Q. What's a modem?

A. The modem is an electronic device which can translate signals coming from your computer into a form that can be transmitted over ordinary telephone lines using the same methods as voice transmissions, and readily understood by a computer connected to another modem at the receiving end.

Modem is an acronym meaning MODulator DEModulator. When connected to the serial port of your computer, the modem encodes and sends (modulates) a signal via the PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network - the phone system to you and me) which is 'captured' and translated (demodulated) by a receiving modem, and passed to the computer. In this way, computers having completely different architecture and operating systems can swap programs and data.

Q. When I've got a modem is there anything sensible I can do with it?

A. Lots! A modem will give you access to a veritable Aladdin's cave of free programs, banking services, electronic shopping, news and information services. All for the price of a phone call, all easy to use and all from the comfort of your own keyboard.

Most of the large public information providers have sections on their computers devoted to games, business and other programs which can be copied (downloaded) to your own computer, saved to disk then enjoyed at leisure. One of them even allows you to display the latest satellite weather pictures from outer space almost as they happen on your computer's monitor.

You can transfer funds from one bank account to another, buy items as diverse as flowers and electronic spare parts, book aeroplane flights, reserve theatre tickets or just talk to like-minded people about your favourite hobby.

Q. What is a bulletin board and why would I want to use it?

A. A bulletin board is the computer generated equivalent of those cork tiles that you pin bits of card to at school, college or work.

The computer with the bulletin board software divides the available RAM memory and drive space of that machine into sections which can be accessed via a remote computer and modem. Each section contains information, programs to download and games to play.

There's usually a 'chat-line' so that you can speak to the person responsible for the running of the bulletin board (the 'sysop' or SYStem OPerator) to solve problems or just talk about your interests.

One of the principle reasons for using a bulletin board - or BBS - is to download software. Imagine the traditional cork tile bulletin board. If you wanted to exchange or a give away a copy of a program that you had written, you might pop a disk into a polythene bag and pin it to the notice board with a note saying that anyone who wanted a copy was welcome to take the disk and copy then put it back in place on the board. Downloading software from a BBS is exactly the same. The sysop or one of the many users places a program in one of the sections of the board with a file saying 'jolly good word processor, please take a copy'.

Under software control, your computer can then be instructed to make a copy of that software, leaving the original intact and in place and putting a copy on your disk drive.

Another reason for the popularity of the BBS is that mny well-known programmers and industry figures regularly access bulletin boards providing you with a chance to question them about aspects of their jobs or your hobby.

The bulletin board acts as an electronic meeting place for those interested in swapping ideas and software.

Q. Why do people take the mickey out of comms so much?

A. As with any hobby that enthralls its enthusiasts to the point where they devote a large amount of time and energy to its pursuit, there are people outside who would rather sit on their behinds and make facetious remarks instead of displaying some motivation of their own.

Q. I've heard horror stories about how complicated it all is. How much is there to learn?

A. Very little. You must know how to unpack your new modem, how to locate the serial port at the rear of your computer and how to connect the two with the lead provided. If you can then boot up the communications software necessary for the operation of the modem, all you have to do is familiarise yourself with the several different speeds, and transmissions methods used in comms. These are simple to learn and easy to remember but do require a little application with software and modem manuals at first.

Q. How much will it cost me - outlay and telephone charges?

A. It depends upon the micro you have at home. A reasonable modem alloqwing you connect to a large variety of BBSs, public information services etc., will cost you between £120 and £200. Much depends on whether the modem can be operated entirely by software or whether you have to twiddle knobs, speeds offered and manufacturer. Telephone charges are those current at the time of use. British Telecom provide free booklets detailing cheap rate charge bands such as those after 6.00pm, Saturdays and Sundays, high cost band rates - mid morning - etc., and give the cost per minute for each. It might take you two minutes to download a genuinely useful piece of software from a bulletin board – total cost 20p or so. You might spend anything from two minutes to an hour roaming round a bulletin board service, costing up to a quid or two.

Problems occur when excited users forget how long they've ben 'on the air' as they downloaded megabyte after megabyte of free software then receive a metre long BT bill.

Q. I run a small business. Should I get a fax or a modem?

A. A fax. That device will allow you to contact your wholesalers, solicitors or the receivers when the business sinks. Modems are mainly in the hands of computer enthusiasts and although there are some services such as company searches, current financial information etc., they are in the main useless to the small business person (unless they happens to have '...a little problem with hex evaluation when using the Compact Code assembler on my Sord M5 computer...').●

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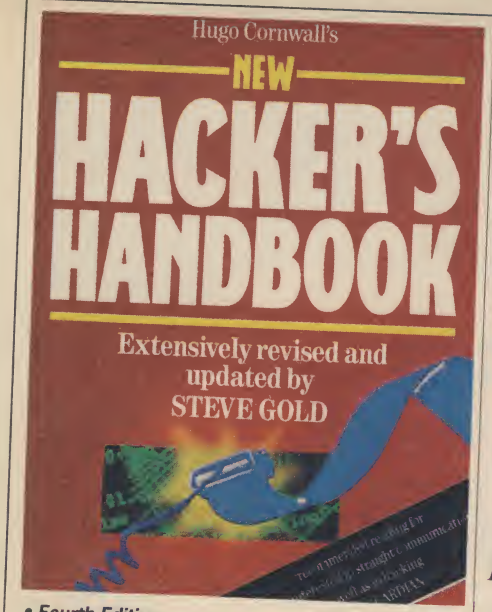
THE SOFTWARE TOOLWORKS

CLOSE TO THE EDGE



- *Fourth Edition*
- *Hugo Cornwall/ revised by Steve Gold*
- *£9.99*
- *Century*
- *ISBN 0- 7126-3454-1*

Hacking will soon be illegal if the Law Lords' recommendations are taken up. Meanwhile, the Hacker's Handbook – the book that tells you how it's all done – is out in its fourth edition. Basil Pigg takes a look...

If you caught someone sneaking around inside your house at three in the morning, what would you do? A policeman cousin of mine suggested that you 'hit them over the head as hard as you can with the heaviest object you can find, and swear blind in court that they came at you with a knife.'

If the snooper claimed in court they were only checking your security, and were about to write to you informing you of your security loopholes out of the kindness of their heart, would you believe them?

Of course not. But this is the sort of justification that is often given by hackers who like to spend their time nosing around other people's business. The comparison is possibly invidious, but it's the natural one to make.

Steering into trouble?

Authors Cornwall and Gold – the latter being famous for his prosecution BT over the Great Prestel Hack – are clear about the problems from the start. 'Hacking is an activity like few others – it sometimes steers close to the edge of what is conventionally and legally acceptable,' they say. One wonders from which side.

Their basic principle is that hacking is a harmless pastime, indulged in by people how just like finding out how things work. Computer crime, they point out, is 90% down to simple false information entry – old-fashioned embezzlement – rather than modem-based electronic larceny. Most computer crime is committed by employees against employers – by people with inside knowledge that no outside hacker can ever get.

Even the business of the West German hackers selling secrets to the Soviets was a hoax, they believe. They don't say whose, but the fact that one of them was a paranoid seems to pass the blame away.

There's plenty of technical information here especially on communications – a notoriously jargon-ridden subject. The process of hacking from the hardware you need to the sort of passwords and tricks you can use to get into systems are all gone into in plenty of detail.

They list the most common passwords, for example, as HELP, TEST, TESTER, SYSTEM etc., through SEX and its various synonyms and linked concepts, to PHONE and FRED (the last being the easiest word for a one-finger typist to enter, as is obvious from looking at a keyboard).

The various videotex systems used by the major British companies such as Rumbelows, Debenhams, BHS and so on are described, and there are plenty of leads for the curious hacker who wants to nose around. Many of the incredible loopholes that have appeared in systems in the past are described, all now closed.

Prestel for action

One particularly revealing passage is Gold's description of the Great Prestel Hack. It all started with his partner, Robert Schifreen, finding out by trial and error that he could access sensitive areas of Prestel using the identity G Reynolds, the ID 2222222222, and the password 1234. From here Gold and Schifreen accessed parts of Prestel that enabled them to change pages and examine private individuals' mailboxes.

The most interesting name on the accounts list was HRH The Duke of Edinburgh (though his mailbox had not been used for over a year when his partner Robert Schifreen looked into it).

BT's eventually unsuccessful action against them for 'uttering a forgery' failed on the grounds that no physical 'instrument' required to make their action illegal had been made; whether or not a password 'exists' in a physical sense is a nice point.

It cost BT two million. They could have done Gold and Schifreen for the theft of electricity, but the fines would have been small. The case established that there was not necessarily anything illegal about some forms of hacking and that's how things still stand – for now.

It's difficult to know what to think about this book. Despite the authors' constant assertions that real hackers are interested in how things work, not stealing, and that the real crooks are disgruntled bank employees altering the computer from the inside, you do get the same suspicions that you'd have on meeting that early morning snooper in your front room. Only one per cent of computer crimes are discovered, according to police figures quoted, which doesn't help you sleep at night if your accounts happen to be computer based.

However, as a handbook for hackers, it is excellent: full of useful detail on how to hack harmlessly into systems and see how they work, level-headed and sensible. It has large amounts of new material and is more extensive than its preceding three editions, and the addition of Steve Gold's material makes it well worth the price. How legitimate the activities described in the book will be this time next year is in doubt, but meanwhile, it'll certainly help you hack.●

EASY PC

- *The best of the PC Independent: Extracts from the Journal of the PC Independent User Group • £1.95 • PCIUG, 87 High St, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1RX*

Don't be put off by the title. Though it's described as a collection of articles from a user group journal, it's not some scruffy collection of duplicated newsletters. This is a friendly, inexpensive little book packed with genuinely useful articles on using a PC that take you right from first principles (such as what on earth that A> nonsense is) up to getting that £ key to print out a £.

There are articles on computer auctions (an often neglected area), writing batch files, choosing a programming language, coping with printer problems and even a few reviews. There's really a surprising amount of information in here and the friendly tutorial approach is just right for the beginner.

An ideal stocking filler for someone who's just got a PC (only 40 shopping days left...). At the ridiculously low price it's highly recommended.

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Easily the fast ST word processor - not surprising since it dispenses entirely with GEM - and stands out as fast keyboard driven text processor. full of features it zips along at an unsurpassed rate

▲ Powerful macros, spell checker and mail merge
▲ Calculator, word count, memory editor
▼ Command driven
▼ No menus
▼ Restricted WYSIWYG

● THAT'S WRITE!

Cavendish 01 323 4761
£129

Another powerful non-GEM word processor featuring excellent layout control along with a font designer and screen grabber. Also includes useful functions such as auto indexing, contents generation and hyphen control

▲ Brilliant print-out results
▲ Powerful macro system
▼ No spell check or mail merge

● WORDUP

HB Marketing 0895 444433
£ 59.95

Almost qualifies as a DTP package as it includes graphic import, auto text flow around graphics and loads of different type sizes and styles. Excellent for producing stylish documents

▲ Good control over layout
▲ Quasi-DTP capabilities
▼ No spell checker
▼ Can only print its own fonts

SPREADSHEETS

● K-SPREAD 3

Kuma 07357 4335
£24.95

Good entry level spreadsheet which is fully compatible with other programs in the 'K' suite. A powerful Lotus lookalike using GEM to provide a workspace of 256 columns by 8192 rows. Many features such as text handling, arithmetic functions make it an excellent all-round business program

▲ Comprehensive low-cost package
▲ Lotus style capability
▲ Good manual

● DIGICALC

Digita International 0395 45059
£39.95

An easy to use spreadsheet which dispenses with GEM to provide a keystroke driven workspace full of popular facilities. 512 columns by 52 rows are supported plus the usual range of numeric functions

▲ Fast recalculation
▲ Holds full sheet entirely in memory
▲ User defined macros available
▼ No graphics
▼ No GEM
▼ No comparison functions

● VIP PROFESSIONAL

VIP Technologies
£149.95

A GEM version of VIP on the PC, supporting 8192 x 256 cells and following the Lotus 1-2-3 industry standard. Fast editing and simple database functions complement a full range of features including keyboard macros

▲ Lotus controls
▲ Acts a simple database
▲ Graphic output
▼ Slow on large spreads

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● FINANCIAL CONTROLLER

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▲ Fully comprehensive, powerful package
▲ Good manual
▼ Needs a hard disk

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▲ Good features for the price
▲ Flexible with many features

DATABASES

● SUPERBASE PROFESSIONAL
Precision 01 330 7166
£249.99
The ultimate ST relational database management package. Features videotape recorder style push-button controls to navigate a complex yet easy to use extravaganza which includes text processor, form editor and a built-in programming language boasting over 200 command words
▲ Easy to use and extremely powerful
▲ Infinite field size and number of records

● DATA MANAGER PROFESSIONAL
Timeworks 0954 80318
£ 69.95
A full-featured professional-grade data management tool which can be used with GEM's pull-down menus or directly from the keyboard. Relational operators allow powerful data searches among its maximum file length of 32000 records and as this is RAM based, DMP can sort at 100 records a second.
▲ Exceptionally easy to use
▲ Impressive report facilities
▼ Manual needs a better index

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

● TIMEWORKS DTP
GST/Timeworks 0954 81991
£129
One of the first medium priced DTP packages, GEM based and compatible with the wide range of Bitstream Fontware. A frame based system incorporating master templates, paragraph styles, page guides and automatic text wrap-around graphics. Timeworks also includes a a good range of drawing facilities and is able to handle documents up to 999 pages.
▲ Excellent DTP at budget price
▲ Imports wide range of text and pictures

● FLEET STREET EDITOR
Mirrorsoft 01 928 1454
£ 184
A GEM style package, Bitstream font compatible, but generally slower to use than real GEM DTPs. Both text and Graphics can be manipulated on the same screen and overlap each other. A wide selection of clip art is supplied but the working document has to be reloaded before insertion.
▲ Good clip art selection
▲ Wide file format supported
▼ No automatic reflowing of text
▼ Relatively slow and unfriendly

● PUBLISHING PARTNER
Clik ST 0753 682 988
£ 159.99
Excellent GEM -based pagemaker system, with multiple-on screen pages, impressive range of fonts and text sizes and facility to import different ST graphics formats. Also includes a range of drawing tools and variable magnification. Fast screen updates and high quality printer output
▲ Comprehensive and fast
▲ Excellent value

● SIGNUM 2
Signa 0252 874406
£184
Billed as a document processor, Signum allows text to be placed and adjusted to accuracies of up to 1/90th of an inch as well as imported graphics and technical fonts and symbols. Dot-matrix and laser printers are supported.
▲ Fast screen updates and response
▲ Compatible with Signa's scanners, digitisers and Mac emulators
▼ Price

GRAPHICS

● CYBER PAINT
Electric Distribution 0480 496666
£69.95
Breathtaking bitmapped animation and graphics package from American magazine/software publisher Antic. This program features some incredible effects including tweening (changing one object to another a line at a time) and very powerful animation functions. Rivals the Amiga and is highly recommended.

▲ Very powerful animation
▲ Stunning effects
▲ Cheap

● DEGAS ELITE
Electronic Arts 0753 46546
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Like Digipaint for the Amiga, Degas Elite was one of the very first painting programs available for the Atari and it's still one of the best. You can have up to 8 word screens at once cut and paste between any of them and there's plenty of useful and powerful functions such as zoom, block handling etc.
▲ 8 screens available
▲ Powerful block handling
▼ Lacking in features when compared to latest offerings

● SPECTRUM 512
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simple to use and effective. There's some very powerful functions too in the form of anti aliasing and gradient fill.

▲ Lots of colours
▲ Easy to use
▼ A little expensive

● ADVANCED ART STUDIO

Rainbird 0606 504326
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Aimed at those with a serious interest in producing quality art/graphics displays. The Advanced Art Studio. An enormous range of fills as well as comprehensive zoom and text handling complete this package.

▲ Lots of fills
▲ Powerful manipulation tools

MUSIC

● CREATOR

C-Lab (Sound Technology): 0462 480000
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Rapidly becoming the most widely used of sequencers it has excellent editing and arranging features. Although not cheap, if you are serious about music then this is the one to go for. It can be expanded with hardware to control up to 64 instruments independently.

▲ Excellent facilities
▲ MIDI file compatibility
▲ Will also adapt to video sync
▲ Good editing
▼ Handbook can be hard to get to grips with
▼ Expensive if you are not serious

● TRACK 24

Comus/Soundbits: 021 733 2063
£75

Well priced budget sequencer with more features than you would expect, rivalling software twice its price. Compatible with their more up-market sequencers and scoring packages.

▲ Cheap
▲ Good sequencing facilities including mix-down
▲ MIDI File
▼ Editing is peculiar

● STEINBERG PRO 24

Evenlode: 099 389 8484
£285

The industry standard for many years. The soon-to-be-available Amiga version should prove interesting. They are pushing their new program 'Cubase' at present but one should not neglect this easy to use and very popular program. Make sure you get at least version 3 though.

▲ Easy to use
▲ Established program
▲ Easy editing
▼ Price

● VIRTUOSO

The Digital Muse: Audio Software: 01 586 3445
£225

A new all British program having its first outing this year. Initial reactions are favourable and it has many things in its favour. It has all the features that are available on much more expensive packages and still remains quite easy and friendly to use.

▲ Very fast - thanks to re-writing of screen management
▲ Very accurate
▲ Can perform disk operations whilst still running
▲ Many excellent features
▼ New and therefore untested in the general market
▼ Price

● SUPER CONDUCTOR

Microdeal 0726 68020
£49.95

Very popular little sequencer that will also control the ST. sound chip. Well thought out, especially in the song arrange section. Can also cope with the fine details of MIDI including systems exclusive editing.

▲ Suitable for beginner
▲ Easy arrange section
▲ Well documented
▲ Controls internal sound chip
▲ Good if you want to control MIDI via data
▼ Editing not too easy
▼ Quantize limited

● EZ TRACK PLUS

Syndromic Music: 01 444 9126
£49.95

Reasonable sequencer that is fairly easy to use. Compatible with other Hybrid Arts programs that also boast a multi program environment. Limited on quantizing but not bad for the money. Editing in data only but good for organising songs.

▲ Good price
▲ Easy to use
▲ Compatible with Hybrid Arts EZ Score
▼ Limited on editing and quantizing

● REPLAY 4

Microdeal 0726 68020
£59.95

One of the first sampling packages now in its fourth version. Earlier versions available on Public Domain as sample players only. MIDI well looked after.

▲ Editing very easy
▲ Samples sound very clean
▲ Tried and tested program
▼ The ST is not the best sample player.

● MUSIC STUDIO V3

Activision 0734 311666
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Has wave form editing, MIDI in and out and output. Versions differ in sound quality.

▲ Comprehensive program
▲ Price
▼ Uses traditional notation to sequence

GAMES

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● STARGLIDER 2
Rainbird 0666 504326
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Solid 3D extravaganza which can be played either as shoot-em-up or strategy with you looking for the parts to build a neutron bomb as you fly around an alien system encountering all manner of alien life. Features some of the best filled vector animation on any home micro.

● KICK OFF
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● DUNGEON MASTER
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● XENON 2
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● FALCON
Mirrorsoft 01 928 1454
£19.99
Superior F-16 flight sim, now with an additional mission disk, featuring multi-viewpoint combat tasks with smooth graphics and superb control. Perhaps not a stickler for realism but immensely playable and nevertheless convincing

● PURPLE SATURN DAY
Infogrames 01 364 0123
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Five in one strategic shoot-em-up from the same stable as Captain Blood and exhibiting all the same French polish in the graphics and audio departments. Each of the five games would be worth almost twenty quid in their own right.

● VIRUS
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● BALANCE OF POWER
Mindscape 0444 86545
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Challenge your ST, or a friend, to global domination in the ultimate ST strategy game. A fascinating insight into geopolitics with you playing either the USA or USSR in a five year span of policy-making as you attempt to defeat your opponent without causing Armageddon.

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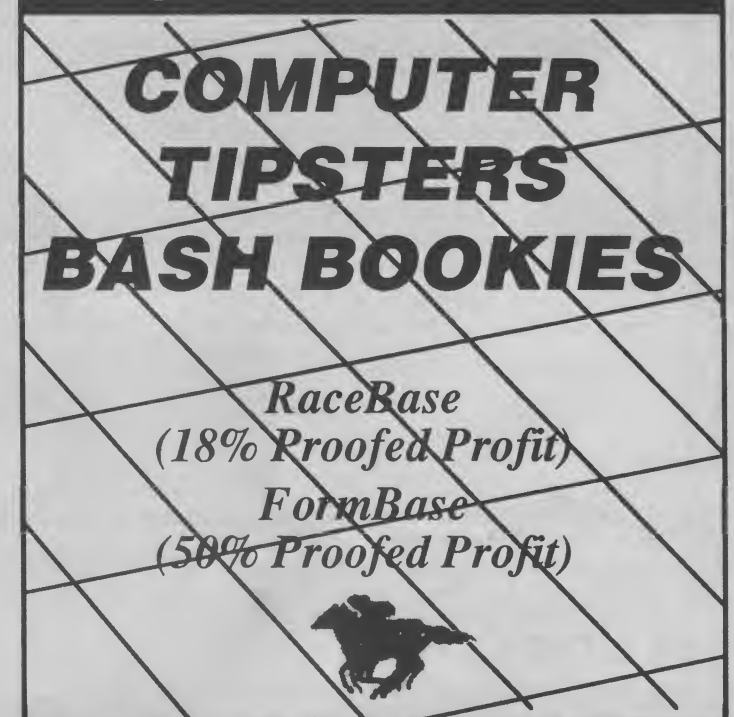

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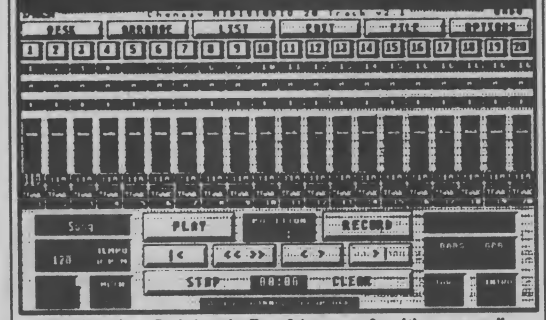

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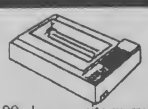

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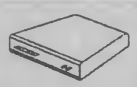

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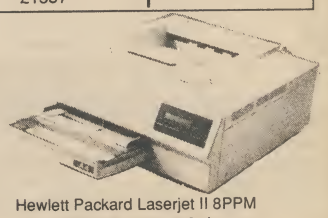

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3.5" DD for 48K Spectrum, willing to travel up to 50 miles to view. Call 0253 31244. Also any user groups for same, Blackpool or Preston area.

SPECTRUM machine code book, title - "Spectrum +2 Machine Code For The Absolute Beginner. Tel Mike 031 2290446.

ST contacts with interest in LSD compact menus and the latest titles wanted. Get in touch with Simon, 46 Cromer St, York YO3 6DQ. Send your list now.

SYSTEM discs (3) for I.C.L. model 49. Fair price paid. Have computer only. Contact: A B Clarke, 12 Athelstan Close, Penkridge. Staffs, ST19 5DQ.

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AMIGA Systems Programmers Guide. Must be in reasonable condition. Will pay good price. Write to: C J Ditchburn, 12 Eden Court, St Andrews, Fife, Scotland.

AMSTRAD 1512 or 1640, must be in good condition. Phone Ian on 01-524 9169, anytime.

AMIGA viruses for research. Send infected disks to: Mr J Ramsey, "Kandy", Wycombe Road, Stokechurch, Bucks, HP14 3RR.

FUN SCHOOL 2 for over 8's wanted for Atari ST. Phone 04862 71574 with price.

ISSUE 6,9,19 of New Computer Express for £1 each (all prices inc P&P) no1 of Commodore User £10. No1 of Zzap £3. Must be good/mint condition. Carl on 0329 667362.

80 COLUMN card plus monitor for poor Einstein owner - write to Mark 146 Fairfield Road, Heysham, Lancs. Also wanted contacts with Einsteins - items must be cheap or free.

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ELITE for the ST offer - Starglider II, Carrier Command, Tracker, Sentinal? Tel 076 387 286.

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INTERNAL Atari disk drive or SF534 will accept faulty drive. Send details to C Margrove, 34 Breton, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, Bucks.

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ST and Amiga contacts wanted Milton Keynes. Tel 0908 310418.

ST/Colour Digitiser wanted will pay up to £45. Phone Adam on 021 433 5228 or write, 17 Ontario Close, Kings Norton, Birmingham B38 9RD. Hi to Simon! Donna! Alex! Freddy!

SPECTRUM 48K wanted. Will pay up to £50. Send details to Rick Travis, Lyndale House, High St, Tattenhall, Chester CH3 9PX. Pref in Chester area.

+3 wanted, will pay £50 for +3 and power pack. Phone 091 237 2329. Must be in working order.

INTERFACE one for Spectrum +2. Have got Sinclair +2 Microdrive but require the interface and tips on how to use it. Phone 0639 884603.

Z88 computer, 128K Rampack, Printer lead £150.00. Also Spectrum +2 hardly used £70.00. Phone 0733 265091 between 6pm and 9pm any night.

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AMIGA contacts wanted to swap hints, tips etc. 101% guaranteed same day reply. I have an ever increasing amount of games etc. Contact: Finbarr Sheehan, 21 Loretto Park, Friars Walk, Cork 4, Ireland.

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CAN somebody please write to me in simple language on how to operate animation on Atari ST. Nedchrome. Contact: Ken Faulkner, 77A Stanford Ave, Brighton, Sussex.

AMIGA contacts wanted, anyone welcome, all the latest, very quick returns. Write to: Dave, 260 Louth Road, Scartho, Grimsby, DN33 2LF or phone (0472) 827143.

AMIGA Circuit Diagram, if you have one or know where I can get one, please contact me. I will pay any costs involved. John, 6 Kemmel Ave, Sharston, Manchester M22 4QS. Cheers to Ray, Paul, Craig, William and Dave.

ATARI ST user requires help with programming the 68000. I am completely lost! write to: Steve, 1 Clarks Field Close, Brill Nr Aylesbury, Bucks, HP18 9SP.

COULD anyone please help me with CLI. What I want to know is to right page of text on a CLI screen for the Amiga. Contact: Simon Keith Hobbs, 40 Penhos Cres, Rumney, Cardiff, South Wales, CF3 8PB.

● OTHER

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GOOD Pools or Horse Prediction prog. for PC 5 1/4 Disk wanted to swap for mine. Contact M. Flanagan, 2 Angel Meadows, Odiham, Hants, RG25 1AR.

DISCIPLE users! The Snapshot compressor is here. The compressor works on 48 & 128 snaps and is only £3.50. Write to Shimon Young, 21 Colchester Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 6HW.

NO Amiga owners in Scotland. C'mon get writing now! All letters replied. Swap utils demos etc. Anyone welcome. Steven Allan, 30 Bughtun Pl, East Craigs, Edinburgh, EH12 8UY, don't delay.

AMIGA contacts wanted. All great stuff. Demos also wanted! All welcome, get in touch now! Mick, 24 Oakdene Road, Anfield, Liverpool, Merseyside, L2 2SR. Phone 051 264 8435! Hi To Power!

ATARI ST contact wanted to swap midi and general tips. 100% reply. Please contact Zac, at 101 Beeches Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B42 2HL.

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NORTHERN Ireland Amiga owners. Live in County Down? Want to start a user group? Write to: Dave, 7 Robinson Way, Bangor. Hi to Roy, Firtin, Skyhawk.

● PERSONAL

MANY thanks to Richard Kemp for the software I wanted!

GREETINGS to Andy, David, Marty, Ryan Mc Cay and Peter, also to my French teacher Mr O'Neil. Remember David, Speccys are rubbish. From Ryan Donaghey Inc.

EX C64 user misses the best game ever! So hurry up Andreen and get Paradroid out on the Amiga. I can't wait much longer.

SEGA console, with Outrun, Space Harrier, Spy Vs Spy and Hang On, boxed, £80 or swap for d/wheel printer. Contact Paul, 2 Hill St, Giffithstown, Pontypool, Gwent.

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AMSTRAD CPC464 mono £65, DDI disk drive £60, MP1 TU modulator £5, 64K RAM £20. All boxed with manuals. Phone Sheffield 373772 after 4pm, ask for David.

SHARP AT compatible, 40 Meg H.D, Match Co-Processor, EGA colour, 640K RAM, Microsoft Mouse, 1.2 Mb, floppy, tilt and swivel monitor stand. £750 o.n.o. inc. Some software. Tel: Leyland 0772 435010.

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PAW - Professional Adventure Writer for sale, £8.00 inc P+P. Works with all Spectrums. Tel: 0709 365879 and ask for Richard.

STEREO sound for Amiga with mono TV, use this booster amp, inc 2 speakers to hear your Amiga in stereo, only £15. Write to: C Ditchburn, 12 Eden Court, St Andrews, Fife, Scotland.

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C64 tape games for sale. VGC. Prices from 50p. Send S.S.A.E to: Roddy Mackenzie, Crofthouse, Methven, Perthshire, PH1 3PH. For full price list. Prompt reply assured.

COLOUR monitor microvetic hi-res 14" model 1441 TTL/analogue 0.31 dot pitch, metal case, was £450 new, sell £125 o.n.o. Tel: 0362 696761 (evenings).

404 disk games for C64. Write or phone for list. Write to: 120 Fields Road, Oak Field, Cumbrian, Gwent NP44 3EQ. Tel: 06333 77430, evenings.

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● HELP OFFERED

C16/14 pokes 50 in all. When you order a poke you could win a FREE C16 game. Send SAE for latest details 90 Oakbank Fieldway, New Addington, Croydon, Surrey CR0 9EF

SPECTRUM +3 help offered FREE. Gary Stimson, 4 Fox Covert Drive, Roade, Northants, NN7 2LL. Don't forget the SAE!

● HELP WANTED

WANTED: Anyone with knowledge of data compression for help with major project. Chris Clifford, 54 Wern Road, Skewen, Neath, West Glam. SA10 6DL.

NEED 16 wizzing Sprites on C64 screen post refund to anyone who can send me MC multiplexor listing with explanation Cheers! C. Gill 53 Old London Road. Flint, Clwyd.

COMPILER wanted for Amiga Basic, PD or otherwise Urgently wanted, in fact I am desperate! So I can produce a stand-above executable prog. Please ring Julian on 0742-438542.

HELP wanted all info on the Plus 4 needed now. All letters get a reply. Sent the info to Mic, 33 Cromer Road, Watford, Herts, WD2 5AL.

CAN anyone help me. I need, tips, hints, clues on how to finish 'Uninvited' Amiga how do you feed runner. Contact Steve 34 Marine Street, Kempston, Beds, MK42 8AG.

WANTED help with programming in Assembler on the Amiga. Write to: Jon, 22 Burnley Road, Custom House, London. E16 3JU. I have Devpac2 and Seka. Send source codes if possible.

I need help on Xenon and Bionic commando for the Amiga call Nick on (0689) 48380 after school HRS.

CAN anyone help with mission 5 in Elite for Atari ST also with Uninvited please hurry I'm going mad Phone Ron after 6pm (021) 472 4539.

DOES anyone know where I can find the MAC to ST transfer program for the Mac Bongo P.D MAC emulator? If so ring 0742 377544 and ask for Ian.

HELP hacking defile KTOR tape to disc also OP Wolf and Renegade, I have CPC 464 Plus RAM pack write to: 6, Frank St, Great Horton, BFD BDM 3BT.

HELP PLEASE! Trying to connect serial 8056 Printer to Atari ST. Buffer overflows. Also Coleco, Intell, Atari 2600 owners contact me as trying to start user group. Tel 08677 2298.

HELP! I keep getting killed in the Amiga version of Personal Nightmare. Any tips or even the solution wanted, G. Vassie, 241 Lochfield Road, Paisley, Scotland PA2 7QT.

HELP wanted on Shadow Gate also pokes on Xenon and marble Madness for ST. 100% reply. David Vincent, 39 Post Office Close, Lingwood, Norwich,Norfolk NR13 4EW. Norwich 716082 after 7.30pm.

COMMS beginner using BBC needs urgent help! Contact John-Paul Fitzpatrick, via Prestel MBX. 5955655441 or write to: 8 Sidney Street, Saltcoats, Ayrshire, Scotland KA21 5DD. Know any good BBs?

● MINI TIPS

BBC to cause a <Break> type call !-4. Can be used in programs with *FX200,3 to wipe memory clear. Mark.

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- MOLECULE BUILDER Graphics of molecules. 2 DISCS.

THIS MONTH'S TOP TEN

1. Ford Simulator
2. World Atlas
3. PC Key-Draw
4. Classic Games
5. Adult Adventures
6. Scrabble
7. Signsmith
8. Family History
9. Essential Utilities
10. Amy's First Primer

PROGRAMMING

- PASCAL COMPILER Good introduction to popular language.
- MODULA-2 COMPILER with editor and linker. 2 DISCS.
- SMALL C COMPILER C for yourself how to program in C.
- PD PROLOG for Artificial Intelligence. 2 DISCS.
- LADYBUG LOGO Graphic educational language & examples.
- CHASM Assembler with tutor for learning 8086 code.
- A86/D86 Best shareware assembler & debugger. 2 DISCS.
- PSEUDOSAM Z80 CROSS ASSEMBLER - others also available.

TUTORIALS & TOOLBOXES

- BASIC TUTOR Useful introduction to standard PC BASIC.
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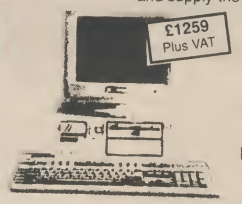

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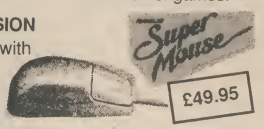

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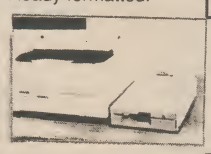

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● ANNOUNCEMENTS

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STREET TALK

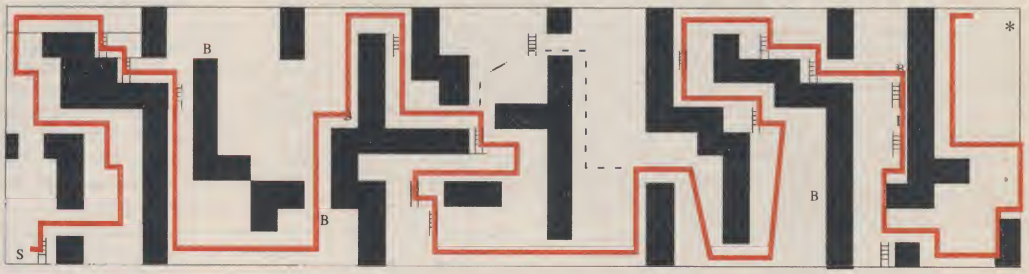
BY MAFF EVANS

Aren't things just looking bright and rosy for the Konix Multisystem? No, not really. It looks like the new "Wonder Machine" is going to take off like the proverbial lead zeppelin. It seems that the "console boom" that was expected at the time the PC Engine was discovered will never hit the dizzy heights reached by the Atari console years ago. The big difference is that back then, there wasn't much choice to be had. If you wanted to play Space Invaders, you either put ten pee in the arcade machine or bought an Atari, whereas nowadays, arcade games can be played on about five different sorts of home machine within six months of the arcade game appearing.

To release a new machine on the verge of the 1990's requires a major breakthrough in entertainment technology. Konix attempted to fill this gap with the additions for the Multisystem like the lightgun and Power chair, but at two hundred quid on top of the price of the console, how many fifteen- or sixteen year-olds are going to be able to afford it? Especially with the ST available at well under £300 with a big bundle of free goodies. I think Konix should not be too chuffed with its product and really get down to finding out what the public really wants.

TAME the GAME

AXIS CHEMICAL WORKS



● **BATMAN – THE MOVIE (AMIGA)**

Some general hints by me, myself and I. They're absolutely ace, so I win the prize (only joking).

On levels one and five, use the batrope wherever possible to move around. Try not to drop more than one platform-height and never use the ladders in the chemical works – it gives the bad guys chance to get you. Sometimes use of the stairs in the Cathedral is unavoidable, but don't hang around!

When dodging the drips, wait for the nearest one to drop then move under it. Wait for the second one to drip then run through. This works for multiple drips as well.

On the driving sequence, don't rush things at the beginning, it's too difficult (unless you think you're hard enough). Concentrate on reaching the fifty mark, as you can start from here with full energy if you die.

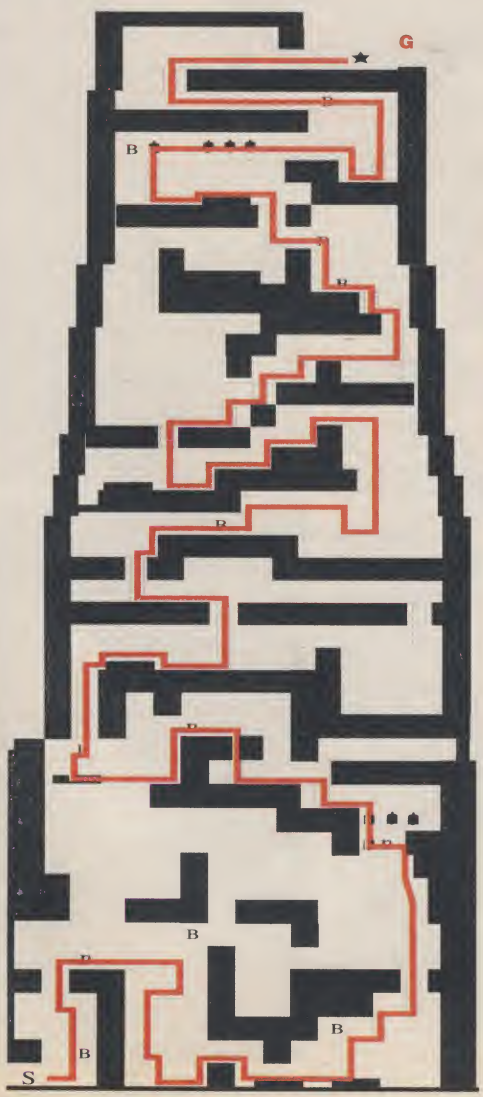
In the Batwing, don't bomb it along, as you'll hit the balloons. Keep at a reasonable speed and you'll be more successful.

While we're on the subject of Batman, I've received quite nice maps of the Axis Chemical Works and the Cathedral, complete with routes for the C64 version. Amiga owners take note, however. The different number of bad guys means that the Amiga version has a different optimum route. Follow the dotted line for the easiest way through.

● Map from Neal Roberts, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd

The maps have proved invaluable round these parts, so the prize of a nice piece of software goes to Neal. Well done matey!

THE CATHEDRAL



MAP KEYS

S - START

- LADDER

B - BOMB THROWING HENCHMEN

★ (LEVEL ONE CHEMICAL FACTORY) - JACK NAPIER (SHOOT HIM TO END LEVEL)

★ - (CATHEDRAL) - JOKER

G - GARGOYLE MARKS END OF LEVEL

- DANGEROUS! SWING TO AVOID

NOTE: ON THE CATHEDRAL, ATTACK THE JOKER WITH THE BATROPE

BATROPE CAN'T EXTEND MORE THAN TWO LEVELS

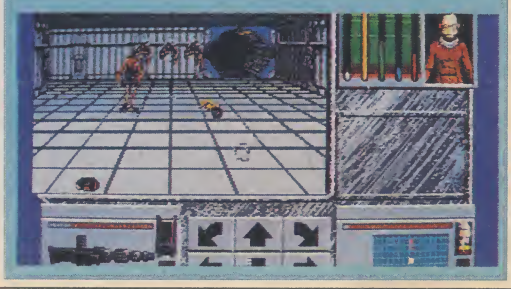
FIRST PEEK...FIRST PEEK

XENOMORPH

It all seemed so different the night before in the bar. This should have been a standard mining drop, but when the cargo pod didn't come out of Hyperspace, it ripped a lot of important gubbins out of the ship, leaving the computer destroyed, the ships cat dead and the coffee machine damaged. As if this wasn't bad enough, the mining colony has been overrun by Xenomorphous life forms. Such is the plot of Pandora's latest space adventure epic.

Building on the Dungeon Master format, the game plot owes a lot to the film Aliens (and why not – it's a good film) with the hero running around destroying strange creatures and trying to escape. The preview version we've played consists of using the guns to shoot at the monsters and is a lot of fun, but the programmers promise such additions as working computer terminals which may dispense items from coffee machines to AI chips, robo-mines which walk around to their targets, grenades which have effects like tear gas, nerve gas or shrapnel, gravity mines to squash enemies and locked doors to access.

The game should have the new items, maps and enhancements (like digitised effects) implemented by the middle of this month. In the meantime here are the graphics for you to look at.



MINI REVIEWS...

ALTERED BEAST ★★★

● Activision / £19.99 / ST version reviewed / Also available on Amiga, C64, CPC and Spectrum

Just when you thought that you could rest, but even death can't keep a good warrior down. Well, what do you expect death to hold for you, a bronzed hero built like a brick privy? Sunning yourself in paradise? No! You have to work for for everlasting glory and what better time to start than the present? Well since Zeus has called upon you to rescue his daughter Athena from the evil Nelf, Lord of the Underworld – how can you refuse? By running and hiding? No, only joking!

Zeus has blessed you with certain magic powers, which allow you to turn into a variety of creatures, from a Werebear to a flying dragon. To use these powers you need to pick up the mystical spirit balls (ooer) which send your beast power up a level.

Hard man or what? Well actually, despite having these things in your favour, the going in Altered Beast is extremely tough, particularly when the end of level nasties are reached. The huge Eye-plant on level two takes an inordinate amount of blasts before it dies. The problem is that controlling your hero through the levels is rather glitchy, with jumps, punches and kicks flying in the most unexpected directions. Couple this up with dodgy audio-visuals and a hefty multiload, then things soon become frustrating. As it stands, it just seems like reaching the end of this conversion would be more trouble than it's worth.

BATTLE CHESS ★★★

● Electronic Arts / £14.99 / C64 version reviewed / Also available on Amiga, PC and ST

For anyone not familiar with Battle Chess, the game is built on the normal chess format, but when one piece takes another it's shown as an animated fighting sequence.

When Interplay first revealed their superbly entertaining chess program on the Amiga, there was an abundance of wailing and gnashing of teeth by owners of other machines, desperate for EA to release conversions to other formats. Eventually, Battle Chess was released on the other 16-bit machines to an appreciative audience, which only left the 8-bit owners waiting...

At last! C64 users can experience the joys of animated board-game combat in the comfort of your own home...but only if you've got a disk drive. Aw! To be fair, this is the only way that the game could be accommodated on an 8-bit machine and consequently quite a lot of disk access is involved.

The game itself is rather well designed, complete with castling and en passant moves – and it's a rather intelligent computer opponent to boot, but it has to be said that the animation is what makes the game. Each piece has its own individual character and some of the battles are very amusing.

The only problem is the amount of time that it takes to load the sequences from disk, which may put off a lot of people. If you can cope with this, then Battle Chess is definitely worth a look.

HIT LIST TOP 5 GAMES

If you haven't got these games, then beat yourself over the head with heavy objects to knock some sense in there, then make off to Ye Olde Softe-Ware Shoppe to rectify the situation.

1. Batman
Ocean / Amiga, C64, Spectrum, CPC
Put that rubber suit away, it makes you look pervy. Just play this great licence instead.

2. Kick Off
Anco / Amiga, ST, C64
Slipping, but still an essential purchase for footy fans and gamers alike. 'Ere we go, 'ere we go, 'ere we go...

3. Xenon 2
Imageworks / Amiga, ST
Only loses appeal if you cheat to finish. I've no sympathy for these people...

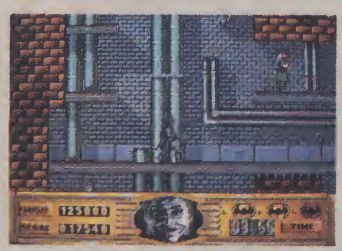
4. Strider
US Gold / Amiga
Swear-words abound when playing this excellent conversion from the Capcom coin-op – despite the iffy political connotations.

5. Rick Dangerous
Microprose / Amiga, ST, CPC, C64, Spectrum
As frustrating as it was a month ago... probably 'cos I can't get off level one!

BATMAN-THE MOVIE

GAME of the WEEK ★★★★★

Hype, hype, exaggerate, hype. That's probably what you're thinking, eh? Well, believe it or not, the Amiga version of Batman is just as good as the others. So like it or not, it's game of the week!



TAME *The* GAME CONT.

● ***NEW ZEALAND STORY* (ST)**
"If you type in TRY CHEATING on the title screen, then press '(left arrow)' you should get onto the next level."

John Oldfield, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire

● ***DOUBLE DRAGON* (ST)**
"Type NEIL HARDING on the high score table for an interesting effect."
Cosmic Pirate (Amiga)

"During a mission, when you are about to blow up, whip the disk out of the drive and reload the game. You can now play the mission again."

● ***LED STROM* (AMIGA)**
To access the cheat mode, type AMIGA DAVID BROADHURST WANTS TO CHEAT. Although it doesn't't specify where to type this, so try experimenting.

Goody, Rotherham, South Yorkshire

DO YOU OWN THESE GAMES?

- **BATMAN**
- **SHADOW OF THE BEAST**
- **STRIDER**
- **DYNAMITE DUX**
- **RICK DANGEROUS**

Not much in the way of tips so far, so hopes going out for hints on the same games this week. Come on, don't be a weed! Crack those games, send in the cheat mode for Batman, the ultimate punching tactic for Dynamite Dux or the best sword technique on Strider to; Tame the Game 4 Queen Street Bath BA1 1EJ

ONE-LINERS

• No doubt you've heard about Firebird's new shoot-'em-up, Quartz. No? Well, the game has been programmed by Paul Shirley – of Spindizzy fame – and features a powerhouse sound-track by Wally Beben. I've had a glimpse of the game and it features some of the most eye-stabbing graphics I've ever seen, as well as super-fast blasting action. It should be available on the ST and Amiga by the time you read this, at a price of £24.99.

• On Firebird's sister label, Rainbird, comes the long awaited conversion of Weird Dreams. The game has to be seen to be believed; it takes place within the dreams of a manic depressive undergoing surgery. Weird enough? Check out the rest of the game at the end of this month, when it is released on C64 at £14.99 on cassette and £17.99 on disk or on PC and Amiga (£24.99 each).

• Seems like a busy time for Microprose, what with loads of releases on its sub-labels and the release of its first space simulation game set for early next year, there's a lot to look out for. The space game in question is StarLord, based on a PBM designed by Mike Singleton, which can take place between up to 15 players. Also due out later this year are the Amiga and ST versions of the now-classic Red Storm Rising. A snip at £24.95.

• Just when you thought all the additions to STOS had already been released, comes STOS Musician, a utility to create tunes for your programs. It utilises the MIDI capabilities allowing tunes to be input via a keyboard or play sequences on external equipment. The program was completely written in STOS, which gives more of an idea of the power of the system. STOS Musician will be available from 14th November for £14.95.

• Also available soon is a four pack of STOS designed games for £19.95. These include Skate Tribe, Sky Strike, Mouthtrap and Yomo. All the games can be whammed about with the various editors so that you can change them as much as you want. Interested in STOS? The STOS Club is for you. Subs cost £10 a year – which includes a word processor and six newsletters. Contact Aaron Fothergill, 1 Lower Moor, Whiddon Valley, Barnstaple, N. Devon EX32 8NW.

• Spectrum Holobyte's driving game Vette is already out on the PC, and soon due for release on the Mac and Amiga, each copy of Vette includes a warranty card which allows entry to a competition, the prize being a holiday in San Francisco to drive a real Vette around the streets. The competition ends this December, so hopeful drivers had better hurry!

GAMEPLAY ● You don't really need me to tell you the plot do you? You must have seen the film...

Okay, here's a brief synopsis. There's this guy that skulks around Gotham City in fancy dress duffing up criminals. He's Batman. There's this criminal that fell in some acid and got turned into a grinning, white faced, green haired psychopath. He's the Joker. Batman wants to catch the Joker and stop him from perpetrating nefarious deeds.

That's basically it, apart from some serious snogging between Bruce Wayne (who is actually Batman) and Vicki Vale, a rather sultry photographer who... well, that's enough of that anyway.

The game portrays five sections of the film: the Axis Chemical Works, the Gotham Streets, the Batcave, The Carnival and the Cathedral.

The Chemical works has you swinging around with your Batrope blasting members of Carl Grissom's gang (Bionic Commando style) as you try to reach Jack Napier. When you finally reach him, he takes a dive into a vat of chemicals, which turns him into the Joker.

The next stage portrays Batman's escape through the Gotham Streets after the rescue of Vicki Vale from the Flugelheim Museum. Using a grappling hook, sharp corners must be taken to get away from the Joker's men.

When the Batcave is reached, Batman must find the three consumer items that have been poisoned by the Joker within the time limit.

Next it's back to the Streets of Gotham City to dispose of the Joker's gas-filled balloons before they kill the crowd.

In the excitement, the Joker escapes to the Cathedral, where Batman must swing up and defeat him before he escapes by helicopter.

GRAPHICS AND SOUND ● The Amiga version of Batman is strong in both departments (snk, snk). The graphics in all sections are detailed, colourful and smoothly animated, capturing the feel of the Caped Crusader's cinematic antics, and with good endgame and prompt screens to boot!

Each level also has its own individual sound-track and effects to give a true feeling of variety to the player. So I think it's safe enough to give full marks all round for audio-visuals.

OTHER VERSIONS ● The eight bit versions of Batman have been available for a while now, with the ST version due out any time. No news on a PC version though. Still, all you PC owners must know someone out there with a games machine?

VERDICT ★★★★★
The other versions were good, but now the game has made its way to sixteen bit, I have to say that the Amiga version truly shines out. All the playability of the eight bit incarnations has been retained and the addition of impressive graphics make it a must for gamesters and Batman fans alike. Don't believe the hype... but buy it anyway. It's great – honest! ●

OTHER VERSIONS

Amiga	£24.99dk	Out Now
ST	£24.99dk	Out Now
C64	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	Out Now
CPC	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	Out Now
Spec	£9.99cs, £14.99dk	Out Now
PC	No version planned	

Playback

Your views on the latest software – call us any time on 0225 444439

"Did you know that you can land on enemy islands and their runways and refuel from there? Just be sure to take out all the missile launchers beforehand."

No I didn't...what are you talking about?

"Don't put 3-in-1 oil in your Amiga mouse."
Old Baddy, Norwich

Thanks. I won't.

"First of all, I am a Pirate. Secondly I buy pirate software. If software companies lowered their prices to a reasonable price - say £9.95 - they'd sell a lot more games and there'd be no pirates. I bought Xenon 2 for £3 and this includes photocopied instructions."
Neil Scott, Glasgow

Aren't you a naive child? If the software companies had no packaging and used "photocopied instructions" (ugh) then maybe they could afford to sell games for £9.95. But who would buy them? Also, if there weren't nasty little pirates like you, then that would help a great deal. Wise up, sucker.

"If you guys could do some reviews of the best PD software around it would be appreciated by a new ST owner."
Mark Painter, Bridgewater

We'll look into it.

"I'm 300 million years old and I've just completed and visited all planets on FOFT. And Millennium 2.2 is the best game I've ever played. It's also the bloody longest!"
Vark, Sheffield

"A great tip for Kick Off is kicking it towards the goal then shooting into the goal past the keeper."
Mr. Statethebleedingobvious

"I'd like to know why your readers keep making references to me in the letters pages."
Joe Soap

Go away please!

Fancy airing your views in the pages of Express? Then give us a bell on 0225 444439. Oh, and the bloke who played "The Red Flag" down the phone on his Spectrum... get some help! You're ill.

AMIGA BLIT

Great discovery

Amiga owners visiting this year's PC Show came away feeling rather disappointed at the lack of Amiga products on show. If it was hordes of dull PC clones you were after, you would have come away happy, but the distinct lack of new Amiga products was almost depressing. However, if you looked hard enough, a few real gems, such as Xebec's *Discover*, were to be found.

Discover is a new interactive information system based around the Amiga 2000 which provides one of the most cost effective, but powerful point of information/point of sales (POI/POS) systems available. The system consists of a touch sensitive keypad connected to an Amiga 2000.

Discover can store thousands of pages of text, graphics, digitised graphics and sound, animation and video. Based around a simple to set up menu system, the user can access information at the mear touch of a key.

Already *Discover* has been sold to several major clients including the national trust who have installed a *Discover* system within the New Forest to provide tourists with information about the wildlife that inhabits it.

Working closely with the customer, Xebec tailor each system to suit the customers individual needs. This can take the form of producing either a basic shell that the customer can build upon or alternatively, implementing the entire system themselves from the initial design, right through to final installation.

Sweet dreams

After what seems like years, Firebird (aka MicroProse) have finally announced the impending release of the Amiga version of *Weird Dreams*, the game that achieved television stardom on ITV's Saturday morning kiddies program, Motormouth.

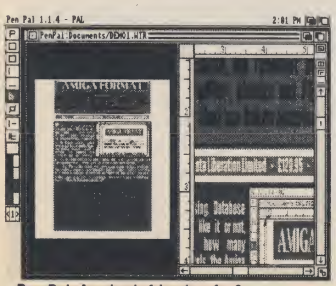
The game sees you trying to escape the terrors of your own warped mind by successfully outwitting various opponents that you meet within your dreams.

Be my pal

One of the few new products to appear at the PC Show at Brown-Wagh's *Pen Pal* Word processor (or 'Word Publisher' as Brown-Wagh prefer) that is taking the states by storm.

The package has earned its 'Word Publisher' tag because of it's powerful graphics manipulation tools. *Pen Pal* includes many advanced structured graphic tools that were previously only available within high-end DTP systems.

Using it, you can create documents containing multiple fonts of different sizes, colours and styles. Text wraps automatically around any imported graphics – even as you type.



• Pen Pal: A writer's friend or foe?

Pen Pal can be used to create a multitude of different document types including newsletters, forms (including boxes, lines etc!) and business presentations. You can import pictures of different sizes and colours – including HAM. Pictures may be placed anywhere on the page, complete with structured boxes, lines and shadows. Once a document is printed, pictures retain their original colours (even HAM pictures are printed in full 4096 colours!).

I've just managed to get my hands on a review copy of this powerful word processor and I'll give you a full run down on its performance in next weeks AmigaBLIT. Stay tuned.

How fat is your Agnus?

It's always nice to recieve some kind of feedback concerning articles within AmigaBLIT, and I certainly recieved my fair share where the 1 Megabyte 'fatter' Agnus article was concerned.

Most letters I recieved were from people who had just purchased Amiga 2000's and were unsure whether their machines contained the new Agnus or not. The simplest way to tell whether your Agnus is overwieght is by checking the amount of free chip RAM when you first load Workbench.

This is done by entering the CLI (click on the CLI icon, which can be found within the System drawer on your Workbench disk) and typing `Avail CHIP` and then pressing <return>.

If the amount returned is greater than 500k then you definately have the new Agnus chip (make sure you haven't had any programs running in memory beforehand, as this could result in an inacurate figure being returned). Simple!

Don't touch!

With all the hype that has surrounded the Batman game, Ocean's other forthcoming releases have very much taken a back seat to the caped crusader. Worth looking out for none the less is *The Untouchables*, Ocean's computer interpretation of the cult thriller.

The games sets you as Elliot Ness, leader of the Elite undercover givernment agency nicknamed 'The Untouchables'. Your sole aim to rid the windy city of the murderous shadow of Al Capone. Unlike most of their up and coming titles, *The Untouchables* wasn't written by Ocean's talented team of Amiga programmers, instead being produced 'out of house' by the development team 'Special FX'.

If you wish to get an exclusive peak at the game, check out the latest issue of our sister magazine *Amiga Format*, which includes a fully playable demo of this stonker of a game. Amiga Format issue four should be available from all good newsagents by the time you read this (wonder if I'll get a bonus for that plug?).

Ninja Alert!

Those exponents of Ninpo are back, and this time they're being their Amigas! Yes, the Amiga has another Ninja computer game, this time in the shape of that arcade smash, Ninja Warriors.

The game is being written for the Sales Curve by the same people that brought you Silkworm. Either by playing on your lonesome, or with a friend, you must guide your Ninja through screen after screen of blood thirsty hacking and slaying, armed only with a pair of daggers and a limited supply of shaken (throwing stars to you). Graphics, sound and animation are arcade perfect, making Ninja Warriors one of the best arcade conversions since PacMania.

Jason Holborn

ST

STOS family grows

Mandarin's game creator STOS is celebrating two more additions. The boring one is *Games Galore*, a £20 collection of four yawn-inspiring titles: *Skate Tribe*, *Sky Strike*, *Mouthtrap* and *Yomo*. This last is described as "aliens hell-bent on destroying the world in horizontal scrolling," which about sums up the whole enterprise.

Perhaps I'm being harsh – have to wait and see the games: I'll get back to you – but it seems to me the only reason anyone might want to splash out a pair of brownies (ooer) for *Games Galore* would be to grab the sprites and music.

The interesting one is *STOS Musician*, a music editor which allows Midi input into STOS. "MIDI input into STOS is a natural move, and this is the answer – one of the most powerful music editors for the ST at an unbeatable price," said Chris Payne, Mandarin's marketing manager. And at £15 *STOS Musician* is indeed a snip. You can select notes from the side of the screen and drop them into the stave; see all three voices in different colours; and input tunes from a MIDI keyboard and edit them on screen.

STOS Musician can be held in memory along with the game being programmed, and you choose from a "library" of more than 100 tunes and jingles, which can be imported and modified in your own games. There's also a jukebox option which allows the user to play all or a selection of the tunes held on disk.

The secret of *Stunt Car*

Don't know whether you've seen MicroProse's new racing game *Stunt Car Racing* yet. I played it for the first time last night, intending to spend a few minutes just seeing what it was like. In the end I spent a good two hours tearing round the track!

As with most car racing games it's hardly Mensa material: you drive a stunt car – hence, I suppose, the title – which is hoisted on chains onto the raised track. Then you pelt around and around, only pausing every lap or so to come crashing down to earth. It's insultingly stupid as a scenario, and infuriatingly addictive.

As I failed yet again the resist the temptation to have one more go, I fell to wondering just what it is that makes a game addictive. It was a question I put to Major Bill Stealey at the PC Show, and what he told me about *Stunt Car* gives some clues: *"Stunt Car,"* he said, "was a wonderful game when it first came to us – a wonderful idea and Geoff Crammond had done a wonderful job.

What makes this game so addictive?

"But he forgot the player a little bit. I said, 'Hey, the player needs a little more feedback! He needs a little more *happy* – we always talk about happy in our games. The happy is when you get a medal pinned on you, or you get to go to the bar in *F19*... And there wasn't enough happy in *Stunt Car*. So we went back and put some rewards screens in there, let's put something in there that says 'Fun!'

"The other thing we wanted to do – it was originally you against all those other guys. But you want to be able to sit around with friends and challenge *each other* to a game, make a real competition of it."

(It is undoubtedly the case that American games players tend to be older and more gregarious that we Brits, though I doubt that MicroProse's dreadful "Microstatus" and "Microstyle" labelling will do much to change that.)

What I haven't done yet, and what I intend to do very soon, is to play *Stunt Car* linked up to another ST via modem. I reckon that would make it just about perfect.

Incidentally, there's a whisper coming out of MicroProse that they think *Stunt Car* could be a surprise Christmas Number One. I doubt that very much – if it is going to be a driving game I'd put my money still on Domark's *Hard Drivin'*, always provided it appears in good time. But nonetheless *Stunt Car* should sell very well, and it deserves to.

Atari plans new Show

The show Atari are planning for the first half of 1990 sounds promising – if it does actually ever materialise. I asked Bob Gleadow, head of Atari UK, for more details. "We're trying to do our own show in May or June 1990," he told me, "and we're looking at two sites, Novotel and Olympia.

"What I'd like to do is an ST show – 8-bit and an ST show. The objective is to show all of the new entertainment software to one section of our market, and then to show the productivity software, the development systems software and to run a series of serious user 'Clinics' in the middle part of the show, where serious users can come and discuss with experts how to get the best out of their system, what programming and development problems they're having and resolve them. And also to introduce these people to each other, and then, amazingly enough, they resolve their own problems."

The advantage of taking the Novotel is that the entertainment section of the show would be entirely separate from this serious section, so there would be none of those tensions that make the PC Show such an, er, *interesting* time for people in the business hall. And of course the box shifters would, as always, be part of the scene.

Gleadow also had some unexpected and fascinating comments to make about the STE, the TT and the Stacy – all of which, unfortunately, will have to wait until next week. Stay tuned, Atari watchers!

Steve Carey

● Steve Carey is the new editor of *ST Format*, Britain's biggest and best magazine-plus-disk for the Atari ST.

PC UPDATE

Magnum Opus

Imagine the scene - you're working away on your PC, tidying up the final couple of K of your new mega-application, or adding the latest names to your secret list of all UK users of *Head and Shoulders*, or completing a massive recalculation of the entire economy of Ngorno Karabakh for the next 50 years.

Then all of a sudden the power goes down and with it your hard drive. The power can be restored, and until it's privatised probably will be reasonably quickly. Not so your precious 20/ 30/ 40/ 60 Mbytes.

A good backup regime can help save the day, but an even better way is to have a good long look at Opus Technology's DataSafe AT. This fast AT, which has a proprietary I/O system for extra speed, also implements a very solid data protection scheme. This works from both sides of the subject, protecting against unauthorised access and against data damage through power cuts, snipped wires, sudden jolts and the like.

The 'go away nasty hackers' bit is handled by a sophisticated security system, which includes a 'boot from hard drive only' option. As you might imagine, this stops anybody coming along with a bootable floppy and breaking in past your password. The 'Oh, sorry, shouldn't I have switched that off' protection takes the form of *two* 65 Mbyte fast access hard drives which park their heads automatically when the power's cut.

Each of the drives mimics the other, so you always have two copies of all your data. This also helps to further speed up the machine. When a data read is requested, the drive which has its head nearest to the data is sent to fetch it. What you end up with is a super-secure AT with a pretty impressive turn of speed.

All this costs money, of course, but not as much as you might think. The DataSafe starts at £1699 + VAT for the mono version with one drive, but with the access-security system. The top whack machine with twin drives and colour VGA costs £2799 + VAT. Phone Opus on (0737) 765080 and see December's *PC PLUS* for a full review.

Backup against the wall

Coming down to earth again, there are those who still want to backup precious data and may be considering lashing out on a commercial backup utility. Don't forget that MS-DOS provides one for you.

The syntax is :

```
BACKUP <source path> <dest path> /parameters
```

where <source path> is the drive and directory you want backed up, and <dest path> is the drive you want them copied to. There are a number of different parameters which can be added to the command, including the /s option to copy sub-directories of the specified directory, and /f to format destination disks as you backup.

The main snag with BACKUP, and its antonym RESTORE, is that all files must be put back into the same sub-directory structure which they left, and if you get a corrupted destination disk you can lose all of your multi-disk backup. Still, it's effectively free and may save you a good deal in data recovery costs.

Leeve off

Steve Lee, MD of Shareware Marketing in Beer, rang to slap my wrists the other day (lucky I don't live round the corner from him) on my apparent confusion of Public Domain and Shareware software. This is rather like writing in to point out that I've confused 'it's' and 'its', but for the record a PD program is one on which the author waives copying rights and allows any individual user to run free of charge. A Shareware program, however, is a piece of software on which the author retains full copyright, but allows distribution free, or with few restrictions.

The Sting, of course, is that the author also obliges you to pay a fee for the software, if after trying it you decide to make normal use of it. This is a very reasonable position to adopt, and one which has proved particularly successful in the U.S. It is also becoming successful over here, partly due to Steve's own efforts. It's the financial obligation, though, that makes both author and agent their readies, so it's not surprising they feel the need to emphasise the difference between their own products and those in the Public Domain.

Chopping\ *.*

I can't remember whether I've mentioned this before, but when copying and deleting sub-directories you don't have to include the *.* at the end of a path. COPY A:\UTILS*.* B: and COPY A:\UTILS B: are equivalent.

Mouse menace

Remember my comments a couple of weeks ago on the imminent release of *Menace*. I now have a copy, and can report that it has made the transition from Amiga/ ST to PC with good grace, apart from a couple of sillies. The first is the lack of a sound track, which like all other lacks of soundtracks is down to IBM's original 'design policy', if that's not too grand a phrase for it.

The second would have been easy to solve, and can be firmly laid at Psygnosis's door - no mouse option. This game was engineered for mouse control, so why should the PC version be written for keyboard, and IBM and Amstrad joysticks. It's nigh on impossible to play with keys, and I for one find this type of game much more controllable with a mouse than a joystick. I'd hazard a guess there are more mouse users out there than joystickers, anyway.

Simon Williams

The Datasafe PC.

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Half an inch too small

The +3's built-in disk drive is generally unloved due to its slow single sided nature and the fact that it only takes expensive 3" disks that lack the storage space of their half inch bigger brothers.

Here's some good news then for +3 owners with secret plans to ditch their built in drives for something with a 3.5" inch opening. I've finally got details on MGT's DiscMate, which turns out to be a disc full of helpful utilities that is given free on request to any +3 owners buying either a Lifetime or standard MGT 3.5" disk drive.

As well as the obvious advantages of having one of these drives alongside your Speccy (four times the storage space being the main one) DiscMate also provides some very useful disc utilities, that include:

HEADCOPY - Allows you to read tape headers so you can see if they'll transfer to disc.

CATALL - Sends a comprehensive drive catalogue to screen or printer.

DRVUSR - Lets you identify and change an area of the disc being used.

HEADLOADER - Converts one file type to another. For instance, a Code file into a Basic file.

Of course, the revolutionary, life enriching benefits of having a 3.5 inch disc drive don't only extend to +3 owners. MGT are still selling their much liked +D interface that allows 48k and 128k users to link up to the things and also includes some nifty snapshot transfer and screendump options. This is a truly Spec-stretching add on. Send an sae for more details on either product to MGT at Lakeside, Phoenix Way, Swansea, SA7 9EH.

The public sector

I've just had word, sentence and paragraph, in fact a whole letter, from Owen Brown, the enthusiastic founder of an organisation called the Speccy Sector. It's a Public Domain library specifically set up for the Spectrum that you might remember seeing mentioned in the Express news pages some time ago.

Anyway, despite being so shiny and new, this particular PD library's shelves have already got quite a lot on them, a total of 16 programs according to the list I was sent. There's a really good variety of stuff as well with a healthy supply of games (fruit machine sim to Trivia), loads of pictures and utilities including Logo and a label maker.

Owen seems to have the right attitude to PD software too – "My aim is not to make money but to benefit all Spectrum owners" – and promises to supply programs on a totally non-profit making basis. What a gent! He's on the lookout, as every good PD librarian should be, for lots of new programs to add to the collection.

If you've got any creation which you'd like to put in the public domain, or want full details of what's available at the moment, send an sae to the Speccy Sector, 1 Roxwell Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2LY. Oh, by the way, thanks to Owen for also sending some 128k tips. Unfortunately, I\'ve already printed similar in an early column so no freebie. Try again.

Rust effects borders

Regular correspondant Hamish Rust has sent me in another one of those excellent programs he's so good at writing. This one's quite long but definitely worth the trouble to bash in as it very nicely prints NCE in the border. When you've finished typing and saved it for future reference, simply enter RUN and prepare to be amazed, or failing that, quite impressed anyway.

```
1 REM THIS WILL ONLY WORK ON 128K MACHINES IN 464 MODE!!!
10 CLEAR 32767:BORDER 0:PAPER 0: INK 7: CLS: LET M=42000
20 FOR L= 60 TO 200 STEP 10: READ T
30 LET CS=0: FOR G=1 TO 30: READ A:LET CS=CS+A: POKE M,A: LET M=M+1: NEXT G
40 IF CS<>T THEN PRINT "ERROR IN LINE ";L: STOP
50 NEXT L: RANDOMIZE USR 42000: STOP
60 DATA 3155, 33, 0, 160, 17, 1, 160, 1, 1, 1, 54, 91, 237, 176, 62, 195, 50, 91, 91, 243, 62, 160, 237, 71, 237, 94, 205, 157, 164, 33, 71
70 DATA 4752, 164, 34, 92, 91, 251, 118, 62, 127, 219, 254, 230, 1, 254, 230, 1, 254, 0, 32, 254, 243, 62, 63, 237, 86, 251, 201, 243, 213, 229, 197, 245
80 DATA 2098, 221, 229, 8, 245, 1, 201, 0, 50, 0, 0, 50, 0, 0, 50, 0, 0, 2, 0, 11, 0, 0, 120, 177, 32, 249, 22, 32, 33, 200, 165
90 DATA 5094, 6, 20, 14, 254, 237, 163, 237, 163, 237, 163, 237, 163, 237, 163, 237, 163, 237, 163, 237, 163, 237, 163, 237, 163, 237, 163, 0, 0
100 DATA 4170, 21, 194, 106, 164, 0, 50, 0, 0, 205, 228, 164, 241, 8, 221, 225, 241, 193, 225, 209, 251, 201, 221, 33, 200, 165, 33, 184, 165, 14, 8
110 DATA 4122, 183, 126, 6, 8, 203, 23, 235, 123, 165, 220, 106, 165, 221, 35, 16, 244, 235, 123, 165, 35, 203, 126, 196, 106, 165, 221, 35, 235, 123, 165
120 DATA 3701, 203, 118, 196, 106, 165, 221, 35, 205, 110, 196, 106, 165, 221, 35, 205, 123, 165, 221, 35, 17, 36, 0, 221, 25, 35, 13, 32
130 DATA 3140, 195, 201, 221, 33, 200, 165, 17, 12, 0, 6, 32, 78, 221, 229, 197, 6, 11, 221, 126, 0, 254, 0, 40, 3, 221, 113, 0
140 DATA 4464, 221, 35, 16, 242, 193, 221, 225, 35, 221, 25, 16, 228, 17, 140, 165, 33, 141, 165, 26, 1, 255, 255, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160
150 DATA 5955, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160
160 DATA 5955, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160
170 DATA 4140, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 237, 160, 18, 201, 221, 54, 12, 2, 221, 54, 54, 2, 221, 54
180 DATA 1642, 36, 2, 201, 221, 54, 0, 0, 221, 54, 12, 0, 221, 54, 24, 0, 221, 54, 36, 0, 201, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5
190 DATA 124, 6, 6, 7, 7, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6, 7, 7, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6
200 DATA 2730, 7, 7, 0, 0, 228, 224, 170, 128, 168, 128, 168, 224, 168, 128, 168, 128, 170, 128, 164, 224, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
```

A plea

Here's another piece of shameless begging for the Contributions Wanted dept. If you've got any tips, pokes or wrinkles for any area of Spectruming (Games, hardware, programming and just general using) I'd be glad to see them landing on my doormat. There's the enticement of free software for genuinely impressive info. Also equally welcome: rants, raves, suggestions, fanzines, software, user group details and any ways you think the column could be improved.

Send anything and everything Spectrummy to Robin Alway, Spex, New Computer Express, 4 Queen Street, Bath, BA1 1EJ. Sae's and lots of patience required for personal replies. Can I get off my knees now?

Robin Alway

CPC centre

Put your foot down!

The fur was flying (not to mention mud) last weekend, when the long-awaited on-track confrontation between AA's games supremo Trenton (Piquet) Webb and yours truly looked like finally happening. You see we both fancy ourselves as budding Formula One aces only lured away from a life of glamour, wealth and danger by the even greater glamour, wealth and danger associated with computer journalism.

The venue was Activision's press launch at Brands Hatch of its new racing game *Powerdrift*. In the event, we ended up driving 30mph single-speed grass karts rather than 700bhp F1 cars, and we never got to meet in the grand final. Trenton ("the tyres weren't properly warmed") Webb span off in his qualifying heat, while Rod ("what black flag?") Lawton blew an engine. Actually, the chain came off, but that doesn't sound as good...

Powerdrift the game is based on a Sega arcade original. You're presented with a choice of 12 drivers and a series of specially-designed courses including such hazards as overpasses made of logs and tight hairpins.

The racing is actually based on the Californian Daytona road-racing championship, and the courses are reckoned to be "geographically correct". Correct or not, if the CPC version is anything like the arcade version, it's going to be a corker. Activsion had the arcade machine up and running at the circuit, and the assembled journos present all took turns at trying to stay in the hydraulic chair as they swooped round 30mph hairpins at around a hundred and ninety.

Trenton actually ended up second from bottom on the hi-score table (ha ha). Who was last? Oh, er, I really can't remember...

Words of wisdom

Reports of the CPC's death, it seems, are "greatly exaggerated". Indeed, suggestions from the press that Amstrad is at last knocking its 8-bit micro on the head have been greeted with outright scorn by the boys at Brentwood. Amstrad was showing the CPC off to great effect at the PC Show, and is in fact spending £600,000 on a major TV and press ad campaign for the machine, starting in November.

The plain fact of the matter is that Amstrad is hardly likely to drop a machine while it is still making Alan Sugar's empire – and a fair wodge of the software industry – money.

Which brings me nicely onto a letter I have hear from John R Hudson of Huddersfield...

"The CPC is a classic; the 6128 can run virtually every major programming language, versions of several major software packages, bit mapped and object-oriented drawing packages and communications software.

"It needs a matching colour printer (perhaps Colourdump will remedy this) and a hard disk (perhaps a SCSI interface for the Cirtech hard disk would fit the bill).

"It has suffered in the UK from being 'repositioned' as a games machine when it ought to have swept the educational market. It is still the best 'all round' computer, offering good games and software for the computer illiterate and high powered software and a reliable, easily understood architecture for programmers.

"Because it is a good 'all rounder', it will never attract those wanting a computer for specialist applications, but neither need it go out of fashion this century. It offers everything for a newcomer to computing – whatever age – and while newcomers will always be a minority of the total market, they will be a significant minority in the UK, EEC and the rest of Western and Eastern Europe for at least another decade.

"I would (1) give it an external facelift, e.g. new colour scheme, (2) look carefully at changing to a high resolution TV monitor (and/or TV modulator) when high resolution TVs are introduced in the early 90s and (3) consider the feasibility of reworking the video RAM to take advantage of higher resolution screens while keeping the original 464 mode. Otherwise, I would leave well alone.

"That should notch up another 6 million sales before the end of the century."

Hear Hear!

Process of elimination

All those fliers having trouble getting through Hewson's unusual blaster Eliminator now face a much easier task, thanks to these codes from Derek Edwards of London.

Just type the codes in on the main screen then press the Enter key.

1	BLOSP
2	ASDEL
3	XPLRT
4	GLPWM
5	EOCKQ
6	LFPRT
7	WMCPR
8	ZPEML
9	ELVPQ
10	CPEMF
11	APXYQ
12	PWVAR

• Mr Heli: six levels of very cute, but heavy-duty, alien-bashing

War is Heli!

You thought *Skweek* was cute – wait until you play *Mr Heli*! Accompanied by an ever so cute soundtrack, you control an even more cute little helicopter which alternately buzzes through the air or waddles along the ground.

There the cuteness ends, however, for it's Mr Heli's role to deliver hot leaden death on a massive scale. This he achieves with a front-firing gun and a upwards-firing roof-mounted rocket launcher. This latter device converts into a bomb-hurler when Mr Heli is on the ground.

The recipients of all this unwelcome attention are the evil Muddy and his henchmen. Muddy has taken over the planet, apparently unbalancing the forces of nature, and to defeat this fiend you must battle through six levels of swarming aliens, gun emplacements and other, indescribable, nasties.

Strangely, the mixture of cuteness and hard-boiled shoot-em-up actually works. *Mr Heli* has bright, colourful graphics, good sound and is also extremely playable. Out now from Firebird for £9.99 on cassette and £14.99 on disk.

Rod Lawton

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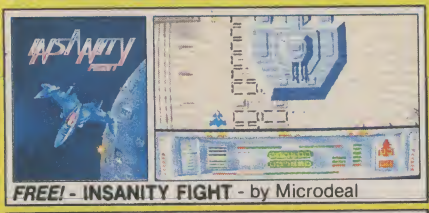

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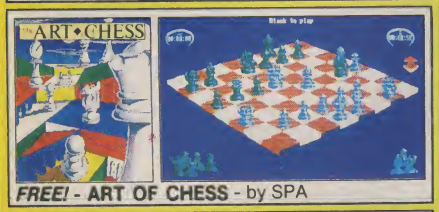

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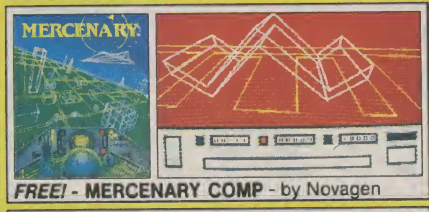

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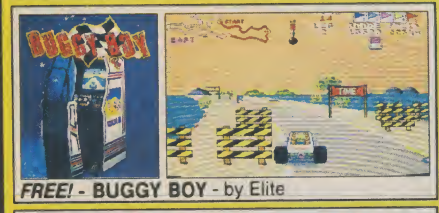

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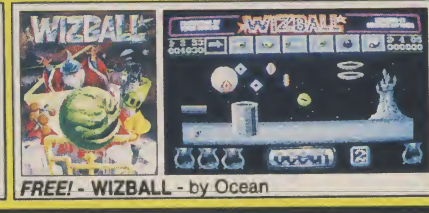

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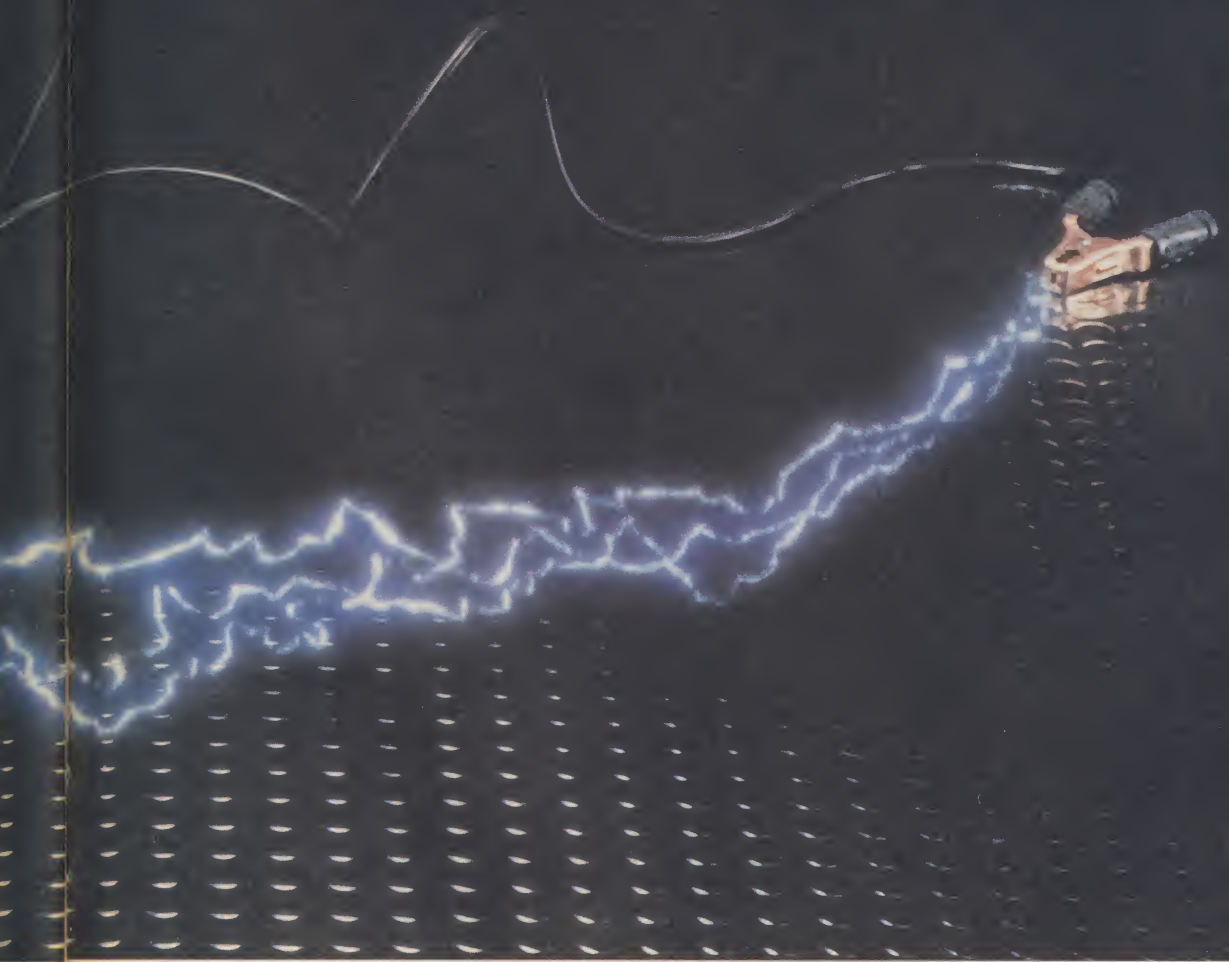

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BEEB BOX

Dutch courage

I am off to Holland this weekend – in fact it's going to be a working weekend at the annual Big Ben Club open day.

Attendance is expected to be around the 2000 mark, every one a committed Acorn fan. There will be seminars and presentations, new products and old to admire and play with.

Most of all though, you can meet people, perhaps some you haven't seen for a whole year and just spend some time talking and exchanging new ideas. A full report will follow, if I manage to escape the clutches of HM Custom & Excise. Their sole function it appears, is to block any nascent enterprise amongst the loyal subjects of Elizabeth II.

Feedback

My request for feedback from your good selves has met with an encouraging response so far. Sometimes though, it takes a long time for the letters to reach me. So apologies to Neil Pearson who writes with two queries.

First, you use CDIR to create directories under ADFS. Second, DTP packages available include *Fleet Street Editor* from Mirrorsoft, *Stop Press* from AMX, *Pixelperfect* from AVP (I think) and *Wapping Editor* which is Watford Electronic's own product. Of these, I would recommend *Wapping Editor* as the premium product, and *Stop Press* as a cheaper alternative. Both can be obtained from Watford Electronics, who advertise in just about every computer magazine. Both also require a mouse for optimum running. There are also plenty of add-ons for each program to keep you amused and your piggy bank empty . Be warned, DTP is habit forming so you may soon find yourself remortgaging the house for the price of a Linotronic Imagesetter.

No squash, thanks

Thanks also to Michael Stirling for an interesting hardware poke that allows an 80 by 32 display in mode 0 without the lines being squashed together. The effect is achieved by programming the 6845 chip for interlace sync and video and then selecting twice as many lines to display per character. However it's easier for you to type in the poke and see for yourself rather than me explain, so here goes:

```
10?&FE00=8:  ?&FE01=3  :REM  Selects
interlace sync and video
20?&FE00=9:  ?&FE01=14  :REM  Selects
twice as many lines per character.
```

He also adds "I continually hear that you can't do anything more on a BEEB. Rubbish - with a BBC Micro your imagination is the limit."
Right On!

Andrew Brown

QL corner

Conquering hero

Although Digital Precision's PC emulator for the QL, *The Solution*, works very well, in terms of compatibility, programs do run rather slowly. As mentioned last week, DP has announced the release of *PC Conqueror*, a new PC emulator, that is claimed to be almost twice as fast as The Solution. This would give it something like one fifth the speed of a bog-standard 4.77MHz PC/XT, at worst. Disk formatting is 50% faster than with the earlier emulator, and the system can boot-up in 30 seconds. The jerkiness experienced while typing with Solution has been eliminated.

Moreover, *Conqueror* is more compatible than *Solution*, even handling programs that 'grab' the keyboard (like some versions of the P-systems, Flight Simulator etc).

Conqueror is available for £89.95 from Digital Precision Ltd., 222 The Avenue, London, E4 9SE, Tel. 01-527 5493 - substantially less if upgrading from *Solution*. For an additional £50 you can get MS-DOS v4.01.

By the way, the cheapest sources of public domain PC software are the various genuine user groups, such as the CP/M User Group and the PC Independent User Group. You shouldn't pay more than £3 per disk.

More bugs

If you try to READ or INPUT a string into an undimensioned string, using string slicing, the string won't be stored, and Superbasic may stop without an error message. For example:-

```
10 A$="Old Computer Express": READ A$
(1 TO)
20 DATA "NEW"
```

won't change "Old" to "New". To get it to work you should either dimension the string, or use a temporary variable.

This isn't really a bug. Contrary to Sinclair's claim when the QL was launched, Superbasic programs do slow down when they get bigger. This doesn't apply to compiled programs, of course.

Also Cot (0) returns 1, instead of "Overflow error".

Cartridge Storage

QL users have developed several ingenious ways of storing their Microdrive cartridges

The cheapest form of storage is simply to stick the cartridge cases together, with glue, in little blocks, a bit like a chest of drawers. I first saw this technique used by Tony (QDOS) Tebby. Unfortunately, the case tops and bottoms aren't quite parallel, so the resultant 'blocks' look a bit funny, unless you reverse every other case. You then have to access the cartridges from both sides of the 'block'.

Some photographic slide boxes appear to be made especially for cartridges. I still use one someone gave me a long time ago, made by Gepe, which holds 30 cartridges. You might be able to scrounge suitable boxes from someone who takes a lot of slides, or your local photographic shop.

John Torofex

SECTOR 64 SECTOR

More glowing tips than Sellafield

As I've got the unenviable job of writing Sector 64 this week, I'm indebted to David Knowles of Great Barr, in Birmingham, for a hatful of C64 quickies. Thanks David – hope everyone finds this useful!

Slow lister

It is well known that by holding down the CTRL key on your C64, the upward scroll of a program listing will be slowed down. By entering

```
POKE56324,28:POKE56325,0
```

the listing will scroll much slower. To slow it even more, just POKE a lower number into 56324.

Loadsamoney!

This onel iner will offer an introduction into screen codes. It will also show you how to make about £960...

```
10      FORN=1024to2023:POKEN,28:NEXT:
POKE198,0: WAIT198,1
```

Roots

Your computer will find the square root of X simply by typing

```
PRINTSQR(X)
```

It is not so obvious that you can find other roots by using this:

```
PRINTX^(1/ROOT)
```

For example, to find the 6th root of 3456, enter

```
PRINT3456^(1/6)
```

That ^ is the up-arrow of course.

Burrow

Yes, this little gem has been around since the birth of the PET. It is still worth examining. Even with the C64's primitive BASIC, it is amazing how much effect can be produced from a single program line. Key descriptions are contained in square brackets. Simply press the key referred to and leave out the brackets.

```
5   A$="[up][down][left][right]":PRINTMID$
(A$,RND(.5)*4+1.1)"*[left]";:FORI=1TO30
:  NEXT:PRINT"[rvs on][space][left]";:GOTO
5
```

Boring border

Want to liven up the screen border on your trusty C64? Type in this short routine to awaken a bright effect.

```
10   FORA=49152TO49163:READB:POKEA,B:
NEXT:SYS49152
20   DATA238,32,208,162,0,232,224,14,
208, 251,240,244
```

Thanks, David. A reward is on its way!

Chess piece

Chess players in India used to play for a rather grisly prize – their fingers. Every loss meant another digit gone. If only they'd had a chess game for their C64 instead! Mind you, with no fingers they wouldn't be able to use the keyboard.

Anyway, having tried Battle Chess, Electronic Arts' animated game chess game, I can really recommend it. The implementation on the C64 is really good, as good as the Amiga I'd say! Check out Maff Evans' 'Gameplay' in this issue for more details.

Raj Chatterjee

MSX TRA

News from the show

This week I visited the Personal Computer show, now held at Earls Coourt, and to tell you the truth, I came away with mixed feelings.

The good news for the MSX user is that many companies are still producing software for our machines.

- Grandslam have two titles coming our way shortly, Liverpool and Peter Beardsley, both of which appear to be somehow related to soccer (that took some working out).
- Titus confirmed that Pipeline will be their next release, but don't hold your breath waiting for it's appearance – it is not due for release until March next year.
- Blade Software, a relatively new company tell me that after the release of Laser Squad, look out for Man Utd (another football game) and Lords of Chaos.
- Not so good news from Level 9: they have no plans to convert any of their future titles to the MSX, probably because the market for English text adventure games on the MSX is so limited, MSX software being produced mainly for export.
- Ocean will be converting more titles to the MSX, but were being very cagey about revealking the names of the titles due for release. It wouldn't surprise me to see Batman converted to our format in the near future.
- Dinamic from Spain still write for the MSX, but as the UK market is so small, it is unlikely that we will see any more of their games over here.

PD file

MSX 2 users will be pleased to know that the CP/M titles are readily available, many of which will run quite happily on their machines. For more information on CP/M software, two companies to check out are.:

- Public Domain Software Library, Winscombe House, Beacon Road, Crowborough, Sussex, Tel 0892 663298.

- The CP/M and MS DOS user group at 72 Mill Road, Dartford, Kent DA2 7RZ, tel 0322 22669. I will give more specific details regarding the services each group gives in a future edition of Express.

Apart from these items of news, I found the show itself to be a low key affair: no SAM computer to see, no Konix apart from a mock up, and no sign of the consoles that are supposed to take the UK by storm. In fact this show was mainly new versions of old machines, and was in these respects disappointing.

Tip time

Here are a couple of tips for those MSX games players.

For *Robocop* to get the highest level press `ESC TAB CTRL SHIFT D` and `F`.

For *Who Dares Wins 2* try

```
POKE &H937E, 255
```

for infinite lives.

Keith Neal

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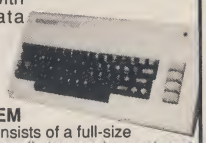

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PCW PATCH

A little note (F#)

There's a new version out now of the *The Composer's Pen*, the amazingly cheap (£75) program that lets you prepare and print out musical scores. Details when I have them, or from Composit Software on 021 456 1967.

The hunt is on

Being in a Treasure Hunt can be very frustrating. You have all these questions that you just can't answer, and you know that all the time money is slipping away from you. Rather like being Nigel Lawson in fact.

Anyway, IMC Software has brought out a new trivia game, UK Trivia Treasure Hunt for £24.95. You whiz around the country answering questions which have answers like 'They are both the same' and 'Herbert Asquith' and 'Yes, above a Chinese takeaway in Cockermouth' illustrated by a map of Cumbria.

Nice graphics if a little slow, and questions up to the usual standard of trivia – great if you like that sort of thing. Details on 0604 54814.

Needle point

I bought a cactus the other day because I'd heard that it could absorb those harmful radiations that come out of the monitor. I felt a bit of a prick.

But it's true: *Cereus peruvianus*, a cactus, can, so Swiss research shows, absorb electromagnetic radiation that comes from monitors – the stuff that has been linked, though very tenuously, with miscarriages and sterility.

Peter Campbell from Cirrus Associates can give you more details on 0747 858165. And no, this isn't April 1st in Peru or anything.

Tip off

Don't waste your money on disc boxes that never lock until you lose the key and cost £15! Buy a 'Card Index Box' from WH Smiths for £2.99. They can hold up to a dozen discs quite comfortably and neatly.

Strange happenings

Here's a funny thing. Hugh Davison of Swansea has a PCW 9512, and whenever his gas central heating turns on, the phrase

>c>x

is inserted into his LocoScript document. Is it trying to tell him something? Are the aliens that landed in Russia trying to communicate?

Scabbler? Cabblers?

As I spend most of my spare time playing Scrabble on the PCW, I thought I'd see what sort of scores you're all getting out there. Anyone beat my personal bests on level 8?

Single turn record: 145 (SEEDLING)

Game score record: 585 (that one included *four* seven letter plays)

As hinted in *Express Listings* last week, I doubt anyone will ever get what is currently reckoned to the highest possible single turn score: OXYPHENBUTAZONE, which rattles up in the right circumstances a little matter of 1,961 points.

Basil Pigg

ATARI 8-BIT ANTICS Roadshow

Jolly Roger

There are many programs on the market which break the copy protection on your cassette or disk based programs and allow you to make back-up copies.

So long as the copies are for personal use only and you don't distribute them to your friends, then it's perfectly reasonable to back up expensive software.

Although software in cartridge form is a lot more resilient to heat, magnetic fields etc., it can still be damaged by unplugging from the computer when still in operation, being dropped or stood on or coming into contact with liquids.

Unfortunately, programmers have ignored the cartridge when it comes to back-up programs.

But there is a way to do it. It's a very simple operation and it guarantees the integrity of cartridge software (it's also a lot easier to boot cartridge software from disk, than switching off the computer, plugging in the cartridge and repeating the process for every new cartridge you wish to use).

Here's how...

Cartridge copying

When a cartridge is present in your machine it occupies RAM space between addresses 40960 and 49151.

You can examine the contents of these addresses with a simple memory peeking program (I shall provide one next time).

Because the cartridge appears to the operating system as a series of contiguous memory locations you can perform a 'binary save' from Atari DOS thereby allowing you to save the contents of the cartridge to disk.

Boot dos and select option K – binary save. When prompted for the file and address information, type in the following:

`Filename.OBJ` (the filename should be something relevant to the contents of the cartridge), `A000` (this is address 40960 in hexadecimal notation), `BFFF` (the cartridge end address, again in hex notation) and there you have it, one saved cartridge. Simple, right?

To use the saved cartridge software from disk, boot DOS and select the binary load option, giving the correct filename.

Next week I shall provide you with a little memory peeking program and a discussion of some of the more important 8-bit addresses.

What's the alternative?

This year's Alternative Micro show will take place on the 26th November at the Arts Centre, Tamworth, Staffordshire.

The Atari section is being organised by a guy called Adrian Betts who tells me that the entrance fee is a very reasonable 75p, and for that you will get a chance to play games, watch demos buy software from a mountain of Atari-specific stuff and generally meet people.

Tickets from Adrian at *8 Healey, Lakeside, Tamworth, Staffs B77 2RF.*

Edmund Blake.

TECHTIPS

Personal computer problems? Express's Agony column has the answer. Write in strictest confidence to Uncle Techtip. The best tips win a freebie – so don't forget to tell us your address and machine

HELP! Monitor mayhem

I shall soon be buying an Atari ST and a Philips CM8833 colour monitor and there are two things I wish to know.

1. A SCART lead is used to connect the computer and the monitor. What does this look like (what are the connectors at each end of the lead) and how much can I expect to pay for one?

2. How do you get a desktop accessory loaded into the desktop?

David Holmes, Great Abingdon, Cambridshire

1. The scart lead has a large D-shaped connector with pins at one end which connects to the monitor and a DIN plug at the other which is inserted into the ST. Although until quite recently monitor and printer leads were subject to severly inflated prices, you should be able to buy the lead for about £15 (still far too expensive).

2. To load and use desktop accessories, you must ensure that the programs you wish to load (those with an .ACC file name extension) are resident in the root folder of your boot disk.

That is, when you select a drive icon and open the disk window to the desktop, you should be able to see the names of the accessories you wish to use.

When you boot the ST, any accessories resident in the root directory will be loaded and selectable from the 'Atari' icon on the menu bar.

HELP! Correct protocol

Can you help me with a few points?

The first is what do you not get if you buy a portable rather than a desktop? The portable I am thinking about is the Protocol when it is available. It seems to me that the portables are becomming so well featured that they almost supplant the desk top machine. The desktop computer I am thinking about is an entry level PC compatible such as the Dolan XT.

Colour is one obvious point. Protocol will handle 80 x 25 CGA. I presume this means that although the display is monochrome you can connect it to a colour monitor. Is this correct please?

The Dolan XT (with paper white monitor) will, I presume, only provide a monochrome display. But a viable alternative would be for example the Commodore PC10 which I think will output colour. What would I lose with a portable?

Are 5.25 inch disks old becoming old hat being replaced by 3.5 inch disks. Ideally I would like a 3.5 inch drive machine. I want to be able to do some work at home and transport it to work on floppy.

I also want to brush up thoroughly on my BASIC and get better aquainted with MS-DOS and machine code. I have some experience in all these but I want to really get to grips because I hope at some time in the future to teach computing *(whaaattt?? – Uncle Techtip)* in a humble sort of way. I am taking an Institute of Industrial Managers course shortly in computing for which I need an IBM compatible.

If this goes well I hope to progress to further courses and eventually an Open University course in computing. As well as this there is the fun and interest of it and of course the odd game.

Finally, can you recommend a book on a structured approach to BASIC. I am currently looking at Jackson's but in fact may be trying to run before I can walk.

A. R. Davies, Wirral, Merseyside

With today's advances in portable technology, the average portable computer provides everything that a desktop-based machine can. Hard drive, floppy and a full quota of ports (printer, serial, monitor etc) mean that you can use the machine on the train, at the airport or connect to a quality monitor and sit it on you desk. So if you really want a portable then don't worry about what you might be missing.

The Protocol is no longer available. The company responsible for the machine's import API Electronics, was outbid at the eleventh hour even though the import contract had been agreed, and so unfortunately, API will not distribute the machine. Another UK company now has the rights and as soon as prices and distribution has been sorted out you'll read about it in Express. In the meantime there are many other very good portables – the Amstrad PPC640 is a very usable portable computer at an incredibly low price (so long as you don't intend climbing too many stairs).

The Dolan XT IBM compatible is shipped with a monochrome monitor but can display colour if you attach a colour monitor (as with almost every PC and compatible).

The disk market is indeed going further and further into the 3.5 inch drive camp day by day, but there is an enormous quantity of 5.25 inch drives in the field, more being sold all the time and there's lots of life in the old dog yet. Almost all new PC software is released in both formats.

A very good book with which to study the BASIC language is The BASIC Handbook by David A. Lien, published by Compusoft Publishing and priced around 25. You should be able to obtain a copy from any good high street book store.

HELP! Play it, SAM

Having read recent reviews in Express of the SAM Coupe with great interest there are one or two questions I would like to ask – what colour monitors will suit its RGB composite output? Does it use one of those wretched scart connectors or a DIN plug?

Presumably Miles Gordon will have a second disk drive and interface to run Spectrum software but what are these likely to cost?

The SAM with its built-in BASIC is a very excting idea for the home user just as it is in the other popular 8-bit machines but do you think that Arnor might be interested enough to consider converting versions of their excellent range of ROMs Protext, Utopia, MAxam, BCPL etc., for it? That would certainly make it the top of the range and especially as the SAM uses standard 3.5 inch disks rather than the low capacity expensive Amstrad 3 inch size.

John Gray, Eastbourne, Sussex

If a computer supports both RGB and composite display output standards then it will be able to drive any of the colour monitors on the market.

The SAM uses a DIN connector for monitor interfacing. Disk drives can be attached in any number (within reason) and two can be plugged directly into the front of the SAM. No interface is needed to run Spectrum software. And the computer can run almost all Spectrum software available.

Software houses are in the business of making money. If the SAM Coupe proves to be a big seller, then you can expect to see companies such as Arnor converting everything in sight to suit the new machine – see a market, exploit it!

HELP! Pushing up daisies

I'm at present using printed leaflets to market a particular service by direct mail. Now that an automatic sheet feeder has become available for my Amstrad PCW9512, I'm considering converting to personalised mailshots.

To maintain my present level of productivity, I'd probably need to have my Amstrad daisywheel printer – as supplied with the computer – in almost continuous use for at least seven hours every day, including weekends. Would such a printer stand the strain for any length of time?

John Gillard, Plymouth, Devon

I should think it highly unlikely that a daisy wheel printer – any daisy wheel printer – would be able to cope with 7 hours a day, 7 days a week continuous use for more than a month or so before being completely worn out.

If you want to perform an operation of this sort then you must obtain an interface and connect a printer capable of heavy use such as the Epson EX1000 dot matrix machine. Anything less just isn't made to withstand those kinds of demands.

TIP! Flying tonight

Re. the letter from Martin Warmington, Crowborough, East Sussex in Express 48. Rejoice, rejoice, for Techtipper Trylobyte is here!

I have, with no small measure of success, managed to play Falcon head to head, two players etc., etc. This momentous event took place at the first meeting of the month of the Solent group of ICPUG (an amazing club and any Amiga owner who isn't in it needs to have their head checked), between my expanded A500 and a friend's A2000. If you're wondering, nobody won because we both got fed up trying to find each other but here's how we did it (after three attempts because my orginal disk 2 decided to get rid of its validator, so I had to make a copy of a cracked disk 2).

With both machines switched off, we connected serial port to serial port using a homemade null-modem cable. Then both machines were switched on and Falcon booted. As soon as this was done the first thing to set is the comms menu, which I did as follows:

Single Player
Amiga to Amiga
9600 Baud

From then on I just played as usual. If one person gets to the cockpit before the other, the computer will lock until the opponent gets there as well. Hope all this helps Mr. Warmington.

Murray Crane, Lee-on-the-Solent, Hants

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